

LEONIDAS.

A

P O E M.

IN TWELVE BOOKS.

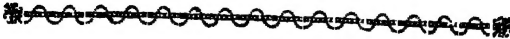
— Θαμειν δ' οἷσιν ἀνάγκη,
Τί κε τις ἀνάνυμον γῆρας, ἐν σκότῳ
Καθήμενος, ἔψοι μάταν, ἀπάντων
Καλῶν ἄμμορος.

PIND. OLYMP. OD. I.


IN TWO VOLUMES.

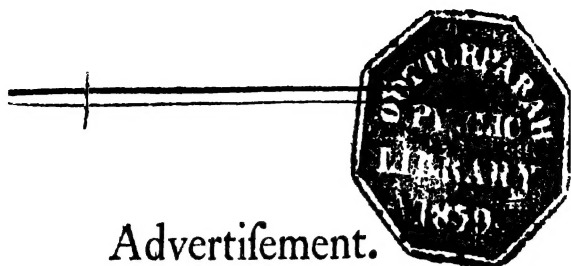
By RICHARD (GLOVER) Esq;

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Advertisement.

THE Editors of this Edition think it their duty to inform the reader, that very considerable alterations and improvements have been made in it.— The poem is not only enlarged by the addition of **THREE** entire **NEW BOOKS**, and also of several new Characters, interspersed, but the whole has undergone so accurate a review, that, scarcely, one page in it has escaped emendation.— When it is remembered, with what universal applause **LEONIDAS** was at first (now above thirty years ago) received by the publick, and with what pleasure it has been read ever since, it must surely afford, to every person

of taste, great satisfaction, to see a performance, so long, and so justly celebrated, making its appearance anew, and with such advantages; receiving, as it were, the stamp of Fame, its last Imprimatur, from the hand of the ingenious and elegant Author.



P R E F A C E.

TO illustrate the following poem, to vindicate the subject from the censure of improbability, and to shew by the concurring evidence of the best historians, that such disinterested public virtue did once exist, I have thought, it would not be improper to prefix the subsequent narration.

WHILE Darius, the father of Xerxes, was yet on the throne of Persia, Cleomenes and Demaratus were kings in Lacedæmon, both descended from Hercules. Demaratus was unfortunately exposed by an uncertain rumour, which render'd his legitimacy suspected, to the malice and treachery of his colleague, who had conceived a personal resentment against him ; for Cleomenes, taking advantage of this report, persuaded the Spartans to examine into the birth of Demaratus, and refer the difficulty to the oracle of Delphi ; and was assisted in his perfidious designs by a near relation of Demaratus, nam'd Leutychides, who aspir'd to succeed him in his dignity. Cleomenes found means to corrupt the priestess of Delphi, who declared Demaratus not legitimate. Thus by the base practices of his colleague, Cleomenes, and of his kinsman Leutychides, Demaratus was expell'd from his regal office in the commonwealth, a Lacedæmonian, distinguish'd in action and counsel, and the only king of Sparta,

who by obtaining the Olympic prize in the chariot-race, had increas'd the lustre of his country. He went into voluntary banishment, and, retiring into Asia, was there protected by Darius; while Leuty-chides succeeded to the regal authority in Sparta. Upon the death of Cleomenes, Leonidas became king, who rul'd in conjunction with this Leutychides, when Xerxes, the son of Darius invaded Greece. The number of land and naval forces, which accompanied that monarch, together with the servants, women, and other usual attendants on the army of an eastern prince, amounted to upwards of five millions, as reported by Herodotus, who wrote within a few years after the event, and publicly recited his history at the Olympic games. In this general assembly not only from Greece itself, but from every part of the world, wherever a colony of Grecians was planted, had he greatly exceeded the truth, he must certainly have been detected, and censur'd by some among so great a multitude; and such a voluntary falsehood must have entirely destroyed that merit and authority, which have procur'd to Herodotus the veneration of all posterity, with the appellation of the father of history. On the first news of this attempt on their liberty, a convention, composed of deputies from the several states of Greece, was immediately held at the Isthmus of Corinth to consult on proper measures for the public safety. The Spartans also sent messengers to enquire of the oracle at Delphi into the event of the war, who returned with an answer from the priestess of Apollo, that either a king, descended from Hercules, must die, or Lacedæmon would be entirely destroyed. Leonidas immediately offered to sacrifice his life for the preservation

preservation of Lacedæmon ; and, marching to Thermopylæ, possessed himself of that important pass with three hundred of his countrymen, who with the forces of some other cities in the Peloponnesus, together with the Thebans, Thespians, and the troops of those states, which adjoined to Thermopylæ, composed an army of near eight thousand men.

XERXES was now advanced, as far as Thessalia ; when hearing, that a small body of Grecians was assembled at Thermopylæ, with some Lacedæmons at their head, and among the rest Leonidas, a descendant of Hercules, he dispatched a single horseman before to observe their numbers, and discover their designs. When this horseman approached, he could not take a view of the whole camp, which lay concealed behind a rampart, formerly raised by the Phocians at the entrance of Thermopylæ on the side of Greece ; so that his whole attention was engaged by those, who were on guard before the wall, and who at that instant chanced to be the Lacedæmonians. Their manner and gestures greatly astonished the Persian. Some were amusing themselves in gymnastic exercises ; others were combing their hair ; and all discovered a total disregard of him, whom they suffered to depart, and report to Xerxes, what he had seen : which appearing to that prince quite ridiculous, he sent for Demaratus, who was with him in the camp, and required him to explain this strange behaviour of his countrymen. Demaratus informed him, that it was a custom among the Spartans to comb down and adjust their hair, when they were determined to fight till the last extremity. Xerxes notwithstanding, in the confidence of his power, sent ambassadors to the Grecians to demand their arms, to bid them

disperse, and become his friends and allies ; which proposals being received with disdain, he commanded the Medes and Cissians to seize on the Grecians, and bring them alive into his presence. These nations immediately attacked the Grecians, and were soon repulsed with great slaughter ; fresh troops still succeeded ; but with no better fortune, than the first, being opposed to an enemy not only superior in valour and resolution, but who had the advantage of discipline, and were furnished with better arms both offensive and defensive.

PLUTARCH in his Laconic apothegms reports, that the Persian king offered to invest Leonidas with the sovereignty of Greece, provided he would join his arms to those of Persia. This offer was too considerable a condescension to have been made before a trial of their force, and must therefore have been proposed by Xerxes after such a series of ill success, as might probably have depressed the insolence of his temper ; and it may be easily admitted, that the virtue of Leonidas was proof against any temptations of that nature. Whether this be a fact, or not, thus much is certain, that Xerxes was reduced to extreme difficulties by this resolute defence of Thermopylæ, till he was extricated from his distress, by a Malian, named Epialtes, who conducted twenty thousand of the Persian army into Greece through a pass, which lay higher up the country among the mountains of Oeta : whereas the passage at Thermopylæ was situated on the sea-shore between those mountains and the Malian bay. The defence of the upper pass had been committed to a thousand Phocians, who upon the first sight of the enemy, inconsiderately abandoned their station, and put themselves

in

in array upon a neighbouring eminence; but the Persians wisely avoided an engagement, and with the utmost expedition march'd to Thermopylæ.

LEONIDAS no sooner received information, that the Barbarians had passed the mountains, and would soon be in a situation to surround him, than he commanded the allies to retreat, reserving the three hundred Spartans, and four hundred Thebans, whom as they followed him with reluctance at first, he now compelled to stay. But the Thespians, whose number amounted to seven hundred, would not be persuaded by Leonidas to forsake him. Their commander was Demophilus, and the most eminent amongst them for his valour was Dithyrambus, the son of Harmatides. Among the Lacedæmonians the most conspicuous next to Leonidas, was Dieneces, who being told, that the multitude of Persian arrows would obscure the sun, replied, the battle would then be in the shade. Two brothers, named Alpheus and Maron, are also recorded for their valour, and were Lacedæmonians. Megistias a priest, by birth an Acarnanian, and held in high honour at Sparta, refused to desert Leonidas, though entreated by him to consult his safety; but sent away his only son, and remained himself behind to die with the Lacedæmonians.

HERODOTUS relates, that Leonidas drew up his men in the broadest part of Thermopylæ; where, being encompassed by the Persians, they fell with great numbers of their enemies; but Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, and others affirm, that the Grecians attacked the very camp of Xerxes in the night. Both these dispositions are reconcileable to probability.

lity. He might have made an attack on the Persian camp in the night, and in the morning withdrawn his forces back to Thermopylæ, where they would be enabled to make the most obstinate resistance, and sell their lives upon the dearest terms. The action is thus described by Diodorus. “The Grecians, “having now rejected all thoughts of safety, preferring glory to life, unanimously called on their general to lead them against the Persians, before they could be apprized, that their friends had passed round the mountains. Leonidas embraced the occasion, which the ready zeal of his soldiers afforded, and commanded them forthwith to dine, as men who were to sup in Elysium. Himself in consequence of this command, took a repast, as the means to furnish strength for a long continuance, and to give perseverance in danger. After a short refreshment, the Grecians were now prepared, and received orders to assail the enemies in their camp, to put all they met, to the sword, and force a passage to the royal pavilion; when, formed into one compact body, with Leonidas himself at their head, they marched against the Persians, and entered their camp at the dead of night. The Barbarians, wholly unprepared, and blindly conjecturing, that their friends were defeated, and themselves attacked by the united power of Greece, hurry together from their tents with the utmost disorder and consternation. Many were slain by Leonidas and his party, but much greater multitudes by their own troops, to whom, in the midst of this blind confusion, they were not distinguishable from enemies: “for

“ for as night took away the power of discerning truth,
“ ly, and the tumult was spread universally over the
“ camp, a prodigious slaughter must naturally ensue.
“ The want of command, of a watch-word, and of
“ confidence in themselves, reduced the Persians to
“ such a state of confusion, that they destroyed each
“ other without distinction. Had Xerxes continued
“ in the royal pavilion, the Grecians without difficulty
“ might have brought the war to a speedy conclusion
“ on by his death ; but he at the beginning of the tumult,
“ betook himself to flight with the utmost precipitation ;
“ when the Grecians, rushing into the tent, put to the sword most of those, who were
“ left behind ; then, while night lasted, they rang’d
“ through the whole camp in diligent search of the tyrant.
“ When morning appeared, the Persians, perceiving the true
“ state of things, held the considerable number of their enemies
“ in contempt ; yet were so terrified at their valour, that they
“ avoided a near engagement ; but inclosing the Grecians on
“ every side, showered their darts and arrows upon them
“ at a distance, and in the end destroyed their whole body.
“ In this manner fell the Grecians, who under the conduct
“ of Leonidas, defended the pass of Thermopylæ. All must
“ admire the virtue of these men, who, with one consent,
“ maintaining the post allotted by their country, cheerfully
“ renounced their lives for the common safety of Greece,
“ and esteemed a glorious death more eligible, than to
“ live with dishonour. Nor is the consternation of
“ the

“ the Persians incredible. Who among those Barbari-
 “ ans could have conjectured such an event ? Who
 “ could have expected, that five hundred men would
 “ have dared to attack a million ? Wherefore shall
 “ not all posterity reflect on the virtue of these men,
 “ as the object of imitation, who, though the loss of
 “ their lives was the necessary consequence of their
 “ undertaking, were yet unconquered in their spirit ;
 “ and among all the great names, delivered down to
 “ remembrance, are the only heroes, who obtained
 “ more glory in their fall, than others from the bright-
 “ est victories ? With justice may they be deemed
 “ the preservers of the Grecian liberty, even prefera-
 “ bly to those, who were conquerors in the battles,
 “ fought afterwards with Xerxes ; for the memory
 “ of that valour, exerted in the defence of Ther-
 “ mopylæ, for ever dejected the Barbarians, while
 “ the Greeks were fired with emulation to equal
 “ such a pitch of magnanimity. Upon the whole,
 “ there never were any before these, who attained to
 “ immortality through the meer excess of virtue ;
 “ whence the praise of their fortitude hath not been
 “ recorded by historians only ; but hath been ce-
 “ lebrated by numbers of poets, among others by
 “ Simonides the lyric.”

PAUSANIAS in his *Laconics*, considers the de-
 fence of Thermopylæ by Leonidas, as an action su-
 perior to any atchieved by his cotemporaries, and
 to all the exploits of preceding ages. “ Never
 “ (says he) had Xerxes beheld Greece, and laid

“ in

“in ashes the city of Athens, had not his forces
 “under Hydarnes, been conducted through a path
 “over Mount Oeta; and, by that means encom-
 “passing the Greeks, overcome and slain Leo-
 “nidas.” Nor is it improbable, that such a com-
 mander, at the head of such troops, should have
 maintained his post in so narrow a pass, till the
 whole army of Xerxes had perished by famine. —
 At the same time, his navy had been miserably
 shattered by a storm, and worsted in an engage-
 ment with the Athenians at Artemisium.

To conclude, the fall of Leonidas and his brave
 companions, so meritorious to their country, and
 so glorious to themselves, hath obtained such a
 high degree of veneration and applause from pass’d
 ages, that few among the ancient compilers of his-
 tory have been silent on this amazing instance of
 magnanimity, and zeal for liberty; and many
 are the epigrams and inscriptions now extant, some
 on the whole body, others on particulars, who died
 at Thermopylæ, still preserving their memory in
 every nation conversant with learning, and at this
 distance of time still rendering their virtue the ob-
 ject of admiration and of praise.

I shall now detain the reader no longer, than
 to take this public occasion of expressing my sin-
 cere regard for the Lord Viscount Cobham, and
 the sense of my obligations for the early honour
 of his friendship; to him I inscribe the following
poem;

poem ; and herein I should be justified, independent of all personal motives, from his Lordship's public conduct, so highly distinguished by his disinterested zeal, and unshaken fidelity to his country, not less in civil life, than in the field : to him, therefore, a poem, founded on a character eminent for military glory, and love of liberty, is due from the nature of the subject.

R. G L O V E R.

L E O N I D A S,

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE FIRST.

THE ARGUMENT.

Xerxes, king of Persia, having drawn together the whole force of his empire, and pass'd over the Hellespont into Thrace, with a design to conquer Greece; the deputies from the several states of that country, who had some time before assembled themselves at the Isthmus of Corinth, to deliberate on proper measures for resisting the invader, were no sooner appriz'd of his march into Thrace, than they determined, without further delay, to dispute his passage at the streights of Thermopylæ, the most accessible part of Greece on the side of Thrace and Theffaly. Alpheus, one of the deputies from Sparta, repairs to that city, and communicates this resolution to his countrymen, who chanced that day to be assembled, in expectation of receiving an answer from Apollo, to whom they had sent a messenger to consult about the event of the war. Leuiychides, one of their two kings, counsels the people to advance no farther, than the Isthmus of Corinth, which separates the Peloponnesus, where Lacedæmon was situated, from the rest of Greece; but Leonidas, the other king, dissuades them from it. Agis, the messenger, who had been deputed to Delphi, and brother to the queen of Leonidas, returns with the oracle; which denounces ruin to the Lacedæmonians, unless one of their kings lays down his life for the public. Leonidas offers himself for the victim.

dred more are appointed, all citizens of Sparta, and heads of families, to accompany and die with him at Thermopylæ. Alpheus returns to the Isthmus, Leonidas after an interview with his queen departs from Lacedæmon. At the end of six days, he encamp near the Isthmus, when he is join'd by Alpheus; who describes the auxiliaries, then waiting at the Isthmus, those, who are already possess'd of Thermopylæ, as also the pass itself; and concludes with relating the captivity of his brother Polydorus in Persia.

TH E virtuous Spartan, who resign'd his life
To save his country at th' Oetæan streights,
Thermopylæ, when all the peopled east
In arms with Xerxes fill'd the Grecian plains,
O Muse, record. The Hellespont they pass'd, 5
O'erpow'ring Thrace. The dreadful tidings swift
To Corinth flew. Her Isthmus was the seat
Of Grecian council. Alpheus thence returns
To Lacedæmon. In assembly full
He finds the Spartan people with their kings; 10
Their kings, who boast an origin divine,
From Hercules descended. They the sons
Of Lacedæmon had conven'd to learn
The sacred mandates of th' immortal gods,
That morn expected from the Delphian dome. 15
But Alpheus sudden their attention drew,
And thus address'd them. For immediate war,
My countrymen, prepare. Barbarian tents
Already fill the trembling bounds of Thrace.
The Isthmian council hath decreed to guard 20
Thermopylæ, the Locrian gate of Greece.

HERE Alpheus paus'd. Leutychides, who shar'd
 With great Leonidas the sway, uprose
 And spake. Ye citizens of Sparta, hear.
 Why from her bosom should Laconia send 25
 Her valiant race to wage a distant war
 Beyond the Isthmus? There the gods have plac'd
 Our native barrier. In this favour'd land,
 Which Pelops govern'd, us of Doric blood
 That Isthmus inaccessible secures. 30
 There let our standards rest. Your solid strength
 If once you scatter in defence of states
 Remote and feeble, you betray your own,
 And merit Jove's derision. With assent
 The Spartans heard. Leonidas reply'd. 35

O MOST ungen'rous counsel! Most unwise!
 Shall we, confining to that Isthmian fence
 Our efforts, leave beyond it ev'ry state
 Disown'd, expos'd? Shall Athens, while her fleets
 Unceasing watch th' innumerable foes, 40
 And trust th' impending dangers of the field
 To Sparta's well-known valour, shall she hear,
 That to Barbarian violence we leave
 Her unprotected walls? Her hoary fires,
 Her helpless matrons, and their infant race, 45
 To servitude and shame? Her guardian gods
 Will yet preserve them. Neptune o'er his main
 With Pallas, pow'r of wisdom, at their helms
 Will soon transport them to a happier clime,
 Safe from insulting foes, from false allies, 50
 And eleutherian Jove will bless their flight.
 Then shall we feel the unresisted force

Of Persia's navy, deluging our plains
 With inexhausted numbers. Half the Greeks,
 By us betray'd to bondage, will support 55
 A Persian lord, and lift th' avenging spear
 For our destruction. But, my friends, reject
 Such mean, such dang'rous counsels, which would blast
 Your long-established honours, and assist
 The proud invader. O eternal king 60
 Of gods and mortals, elevate our minds !
 Each low and partial passion thence expel !
 Greece is our gen'ral mother. All must join
 In her defence, or sep'rate each must fall.

THIS said, authority and shame controll'd 65
 The mute assembly. Agis too appear'd.
 He from the Delphian cavern was return'd,
 Where, taught by Phœbus on Parnassian cliffs,
 The Pythian maid unfolded heav'n's decrees.
 He came; but discontent and grief o'ercast 70
 His anxious brow. Reluctant was his tongue,
 Yet seem'd full charg'd to speak. Religious dread
 Each heart relax'd. On ev'ry visage hung
 Sad expectation. Not a whisper told
 The silent fear. Intensely all were fix'd, 75
 All still, as death, to hear the solemn tale.
 As o'er the western waves, when ev'ry storm
 Is hush'd within its cavern, and a breeze,
 Soft-breathing, lightly with its wings along
 The slacken'd cordage glides, the sailor's ear 80
 Perceives no sound throughout the vast expanse ;
 None, but the murmurs of the sliding prow,
 Which slowly parts the smooth and yielding main :

So

So through the wide and listning croud no sound,
No voice, but thine, O Agis, broke the air ; 85

While thus the issue of thy awful charge
Thy lips deliver'd. Spartans, in your name
I went to Delphi. I enquir'd the doom ,
Of Lacedæmon from th' impending war,
When in these words the deity reply'd. 90

“INHABITANTS of Sparta, Persia's arms
“ Shall lay your proud and ancient seat in dust ;
“ Unless a king, from Hercules deriv'd,
“ Cause Lacedæmon for his death to mourn.”

As, when the hand of Perseus had disclos'd 95
The snakes of dire Medusa, all, who view'd
The Gorgon features, were congeal'd to stone,
With ghastly eyeballs, on the hero bent,
And horror, living in their marble form ;
Thus with amazement rooted, where they stood, 100

In speechless terror frozen, on their kings
The Spartans gaz'd : but soon their anxious looks
All on the great Leonidas unite,
Long known his country's refuge. He alone
Remains unshaken. Rising, he displays 105

His god-like presence. Dignity and grace
Adorn his frame, where manly beauty joins
With strength Herculean. On his aspect shine
Sublimest virtue, and desire of fame,
Where justice gives the laurel, in his eye 110

The inextinguishable spark, which fires
The souls of patriots : while his brow supports
Undaunted valour, and contempt of death.
Serene he casts his looks around, and spake.

WHY this astonishment on ev'ry face, 115
Ye men of Sparta ? Does the name of death
Create this fear and wonder ? O my friends,
Why do we labour through the arduous paths,
Which lead to virtue ? Fruitless were the toil,
Above the reach of human feet were plac'd 120
The distant summit ; if the fear of death
Could intercept our passage. But a frown
Of unavailing terror he assumes
To shake the firmness of a mind, which knows
That, wanting virtue, life is pain and woe, 125
That, wanting liberty, ev'n virtue mourns,
And looks around for happiness in vain.
Then speak, O Sparta, and demand my life.
My heart, exulting, answers to thy call,
And smiles on glorious fate. To live with fame 130
The gods allow to many ; but to die
With equal lustre is a blessing, Jove
Among the chiefest of his boons reserves,
Which but on few his sparing hand bestows.

SALVATION thus to Sparta he proclaim'd. 135
Joy, wrapt awhile in admiration, paus'd,
Suspending praise ; nor praise at last resounds
In high acclaim to rend the arch of heav'n :
A reverential murmur breathes applause.
So were the pupils of Lycurgus train'd 140
To bridle nature. Public fear was dumb
Before their senate, Ephori and kings,
Nor exultation into clamour broke.
Amidst them rose Dieneces, and thus.

HASTE to Thermopylæ. To Xerxes shew 145
 The discipline of Spartans, long renown'd
 In rigid warfare, with enduring minds,
 Which neither pain, nor want, nor danger bend.
 Fly to the gate of Greece, which open stands
 To slavery and rapine. They will shrink 150
 Before your standard, and their native seats
 Resume in abject Asia. Arm, ye fires,
 Who with a growing race have bless'd the state,
 That race, your parents, gen'ral Greece forbid
 Delay. Heav'n summons. Equal to the cause 155
 A chief behold. Can Spartans ask for more?

BOLD Alpheus next. Command my swift return
 Amid the Isthmian council to declare
 Your instant march. His dictates all approve.
 Back to the Isthmus he unwear'd speeds. 160

Now from th' assembly with majestic steps
 Forth moves their god-like king, with conscious worth
 His gen'rous bosom glowing. Such the port
 Of his divine progenitor; impell'd
 By ardent virtue, so Alcides trod 165
 Invincible to face in horrid war
 The triple form of Geryon, or against
 The bulk of huge Antæus match his strength.

SAY, Muse, what heroes by example fir'd,
 Nor less by honor, offer'd now to bleed? 170
 Dienece the foremost, brave and staid,
 Of vet'ran skill to range in martial fields
 Well-order'd lines of battle. Maron next,
 'Twin-born with Alpheus, shews his manly frame.
 Him Agis follow'd, brother to the queen 175
 Of

Of great Leonidas, his friend, in war
 His try'd companion. Graceful were his steps,
 And gentle his demeanour. Still his soul
 Preserv'd the purest virtue, though refin'd
 By arts unknown to Lacedæmon's race. 180
 High was his office. He, when Sparta's weal
 Support and counsel from the god's requir'd,
 Was sent the hallow'd messenger to learn
 Their mystic will, in oracles declar'd,
 From rocky Delphi, from Dodona's shade, 185
 Or sea-encircled Delos, or the cell
 Of dark Trophonius, round Bœotia known.
 Three hundred more compleat th' intrepid band,
 Illustrious fathers all of gen'rous sons,
 The future guardians of Laconia's state. 190
 Then rose Megistias, leading forth his son,
 Young Menalippus. Not of Spartan blood
 Were they. Megistias, heav'n-enlighten'd seer,
 Had left his native, Acarnanian shore ;
 Along the border of Eurotas chose 195
 His place of dwelling. For his worth receiv'd,
 And hospitably cherish'd, he the wreath
 Pontific bore in Lacedæmon's camp,
 Serene in danger, nor his sacred arm
 From warlike toil secluding, nor untaught 200
 To wield the sword, and poise the weighty spear.

But to his home Leonidas retir'd.
 There calm in secret thought he thus explor'd
 His mighty soul, while nature in his breast
 A short emotion rais'd. What sudden grief, 205
 What cold reluctance now unmans my heart,

And

And whispers, that I fear? Can death dismay
Leonidas; death, often seen and scorn'd,
When clad most dreadful in the battle's front?
Or to relinquish life in all its pride, 210
With all my honours, blooming round my head,
Repines my soul, or rather to forsake,
Eternally forsake my weeping wife,
My infant offspring, and my faithful friends?
Leonidas, awake. Shall these withstand 215
The public safety? Hark, thy country calls.
O sacred voice, I hear thee. At the sound
Reviving virtue brightens in my heart;
Fear vanishes before her. Death, receive
My unreluctant hand. Immortal fame, 220
Thou too, attendant on my righteous fall,
With wings unweary'd wilt protect my tomb.

HIS virtuous soul the hero had confirm'd,
When Agis enter'd. If my tardy lips,
He thus began, have hitherto forborne 225
To bring their grateful tribute of applause,
Which, as a Spartan, to thy worth I owe,
Forgive the brother of thy queen. Her grief
Detain'd me from thee. O unequall'd man,
Though Lacedæmon call thy prime regard, 230
Forget not her, sole victim of distress
Amid the gen'ral safety. To assuage
Such pain, fraternal tenderness is weak.

THE king embrac'd him, and reply'd. O best,
O dearest man, conceive not, but my soul 235
To her is fondly bound, from whom my days
Their largest share of happiness deriv'd.

Can I, who yield my breath, left others mourn,
Left thousands should be wretched, when she pines,
More lov'd, than any, tho' less dear than all, 240
Can I neglect her griefs? In future days,
If thou with grateful memory record
My name and fate, O Sparta, pass not this
Unheeded by. The life, for thee resign'd,
Knew not a painful hour to tire my soul, 245
Nor were they common joys I left behind.

So spake the patriot, and his heart o'erflow'd
In tend'rest passion. Then in eager haste
The faithful partner of his bed he sought.
Amid her weeping children sat the queen 250
Immoveable and mute. Her swimming eyes
Bent to the earth. Her arms were folded o'er
Her lab'ring bosom, blotted with her tears.
As, when a dusky mist involves the sky,
The moon through all the dreary vapours spreads 255
The radiant vesture of her silver light
O'er the dull face of nature; so the queen,
Divinely graceful shining through her grief,
Brighten'd the cloud of woe. Her lord approach'd.
Soon, as in gentlest phrase his well-known voice 260
Awak'd her drooping spirit, for a time
Care was appeas'd. She lifts her languid head.
She gives this utterance to her tender thoughts.

O THOU, whose presence is my sole delight;
If thus, Leonidas, thy looks and words 265
Can check the rapid current of distress,
How am I mark'd for misery! How long!
When of life's journey less, than half, is pass'd,

And

And I must hear those calming sounds no more,
Nor see that face, which makes affliction smile. 270

THIS said, returning grief o'erwhelms her breast.
Her orphan children, her devoted lord,
Pale, bleeding, breathless on the field of death,
Her ever-during solitude of woe, •
All rise in mingled horror to her sight, 275
When thus in bitt'rest agony she spake.

O WHITHER art thou going from my arms !
Shall I no more behold thee ! Oh ! no more,
In conquest clad, o'erspread with glorious dust,
Wilt thou return to greet thy native soil, 280
And find thy dwelling joyful ! Ah ! too brave,
Why wouldst thou hurry to the dreary gates
Of death, uncall'd—Another might have bled,
Like thee a victim of Alcides' race,
Less dear to all, and Sparta been secure. 285
Now ev'ry eye with mine is drown'd in tears.
All with these babes lament a father lost.
Alas ! how heavy is our lot of pain !
Our sighs must last, when ev'ry other breast
Exults in safety, purchas'd by our loss. 290
Thou didst not heed our anguish—didst not seek,
One pause for my instruction how to bear
Thy endless absence, or like thee to die.

UNUTTERABLE sorrow here confin'd
Her voice. These words Leonidas return'd. 295

I SEE, I share thy agony. My soul
Ne'er knew, how warm the prevalence of love,
How strong a parent's feelings, till this hour ;
Nor was she once insensible to thee

In all her fervour to assert my fame 300
How had the honours of my name been stain'd
By hesitation? Shameful life preferr'd
By an inglorious colleague would have left
No choice, but what were infamy to shun,
Not virtue to accept. Then deem no more, 305
That of thy love regardless, or thy tears,
I rush, uncall'd, to death. The voice of fate,
The gods, my fame, my country press my doom.
Oh! thou dear mourner! Wherefore swells afresh
That tide of woe? Leonidas must fall. 310
Alas! far heavier misery impends
O'er thee and these, if soften'd by thy tears,
I shamefully refuse to yield that breath,
Which justice, glory, liberty and heav'n
Claim for my country, for my sons and thee. 315
Think on my long unalter'd love. Reflect
On my paternal fondness. Hath my heart
E'er known a pause in love, or pious care?
Now shall that care, that tenderness be shewn
Most warm, most faithful. When thy husband dies 320
For Lacedæmon's safety, thou wilt share
Thou and thy children the diffusive good.
I am selected by th' immortal gods
To save a people. Should my timid heart
That sacred charge abandon, I should plunge 325
Thee too in shame, in sorrow. Thou wouldst mourn
With Lacedæmon; wouldst with her sustain
Thy painful portion of oppression's weight.
Behold thy sons now worthy of their name,
Their Spartan birth. Their growing bloom would pine 330
Depress'd,

Depress'd, dishonour'd, and their youthful hearts
Beat at the sound of liberty no more.

On their own merit, on their father's fame,
When he the Spartan freedom hath confirm'd,
Before the world illustrious will they rise 335
Their country's bulwark, and their mother's joy.

HERE paus'd the patriot. In religious awe
Grief heard the voice of virtue. No complaint
The solemn silence broke. Tears ceas'd to flow ;
Ceas'd for a moment soon again to stream. 340

Behold, in arms before the palace drawn,
His brave companions of the war demand
Their leader's presence. Then her griefs renew'd,
Surpassing utterance, intercept her sighs.
Each accent freezes on her falt'ring tongue. 345

In speechless anguish on the hero's breast
She sinks. On ev'ry side his children press,
Hang on his knees, and kiss his honour'd hand.
His soul no longer struggles to confine
Her agitation. Down the hero's cheek, 350

Down flows the manly sorrow. Great in woe
Amid his children, who inclose him round,
He stands, indulging tenderness and love
In graceful tears, when thus with lifted eyes,
Address'd to heav'n. Thou ever-living pow'r, 355
Look down propitious, sire of gods and men !

O to this faithful woman, whose desert
May claim thy favour, grant the hours of peace !
And thou, my bright forefather, seed of Jove,
O Hercules, neglect not these thy race ! 360
But since that spirit, I from thee derive,

Transports me from them to resistless fate,
 Be thou their guardian! Teach them like thyself
 By glorious labours to embellish life,
 And from their father let them learn to die. 365

HERE ending, forth he issues, and assumes
 Before the ranks his station of command.
 They now proceed. So mov'd the host of heav'n
 On Phlegra's plains to meet the giant sons
 Of Earth and Titan. From Olympus march'd 370
 The deities embattled; while their king
 Tow'r'd in the front with thunder in his grasp.
 Thus through the streets of Lacedæmon pass'd
 Leonidas. Before his footsteps bow
 The multitude exulting. On he treads 375
 Rever'd. Unsated, their enraptur'd sight
 Pursues his graceful stature, and their tongues
 Extol and hail him, as their guardian god.
 Firm in his nervous hand he grips the spear.
 Low, as the ankles, from his shoulders hangs 380
 The massy shield; and o'er his burnish'd helm
 The purple plumage nods. Harmonious youths,
 Around whose brows entwining laurels play,
 In lofty-sounding strains his praise record;
 While snowy-finger'd virgins all the way 385
 Bestrew with od'rous garlands. Now his breast
 Is all possess'd by glory, which dispell'd
 Whate'er of grief remain'd, or vain regret
 For those, he left behind. The rev'rend train
 Of Lacedæmon's senate last appear 390
 To take their final, solemn leave, and grace
 Their hero's parting steps. Around him flow

In civil pomp their venerable robes,
 Mix'd with the blaze of arms. The shining troop
 Of warriors press behind him, Maron here 395
 With Menalippus warm in flow'ry prime,
 There Agis, there Megistias, and the chief,
 Dieneces. Laconia's dames ascend
 The loftiest mansions; thronging o'er the roofs,
 Applaud their sons, their husbands, as they march: 400
 So parted Argo from th' Iolchian Strand
 To plough the foaming surge. Thessalia's nymphs,
 Rang'd on the cliffs, o'er shading Neptune's face,
 Still on the distant vessel fix'd their eyes
 Admiring, still in pæans blest'd the helm, 405
 By Greece entrusted with her chosen sons
 For high adventures on the Colchian shore.

SWIFT on his course Leonidas proceeds.
 Soon is Eurotas pass'd, and Lerna's bank,
 Where his victorious ancestor subdu'd 410
 The many-headed Hydra, and the lake
 'To endless fame consign'd. Th' unwearied bands
 Next through the pines of Mænalus he led,
 And down Parthenius urg'd the rapid toil.
 Six days incessant was their march pursu'd, 415
 When to their ear the hoarse-resounding waves
 Beat on the Isthmus. Here the tents are spread.
 Below the wide horizon then the sun
 Had dropp'd his beamy locks. The queen of night
 Gleam'd from the center of th' ethereal vault, 420
 And o'er the raven plumes of darkness shed
 Her placid light. Leonidas detains
 Dieneces and Agis. Open stands

The tall pavilion, and admits the moon.
As here they sit conversing, from the hill, 425
Which rose before them, one of noble port
Is seen descending. Lightly down the slope
He treads. He calls aloud. They heard, they knew
The voice of Alpheus, whom the king address'd.

O THOU, with swiftncfs by the gods endu'd 430
To match the ardour of thy daring soul,
What from the Isthmus draws thee? Do the Greeks
Neglect to arm and face the public foe?

Good news give wings, said Alpheus. Greece is arm'd.
The neighb'ring Isthmus holds th' Arcadian bands. 435
From Mantinea Diophantus leads
Five hundred spears; nor less from Tegea's walls
With Hegesander move. A thousand more, .
Who in Orchomenus reside, and range
Along Parrhasius, or Cyllene's brow; 440
Who near the foot of Erymanthus dwell,
Or on Alphean banks, with various chiefs
Expect thy presence. Most is Clonius fam'd,
Of stature huge, unshaken rock of war.
Four hundred warriors brave Alcmaeon draws 445
From stately Corinth's tow'rs. Two hundred march
From Phlius. Them Eupalamus commands.
An equal number of Mycenæ's race
Aristobulus heads. Through fear alone
Of thee, and threat'ning Greece the Thebans arm. 450
A few in Thebes authority and rule
Usurp. Corrupted with Barbarian gold,
They quench the gen'rous, eleutherian flame
In ev'ry heart. The eloquent they bribe.

By

By specious tales the multitude they cheat, 455

Establishing base measures on the plea

Of public safety. Others are immers'd

In all the sloth of plenty, who, unmov'd

In shameful ease, behold the state betray'd,

Aw'd by thy name, four hundred took the field, 460

The wily Anaxander is their chief

With Leontiades. To see their march

I staid, then hasten'd to survey the streights,

Which thou shalt render sacred to renown.

FOR EVER mingled with a crumbling soil, 465

Which moulders round th' indented Malian coast,

The sea rolls slimy. On a solid rock,

Which forms the inmost limit of a bay,

Thermopylæ is stretch'd. Where broadest spread,

It measures threescore paces, bounded here 470

By the salt ooze, which underneath presents

A dreary surface ; there the lofty cliffs

Of woody'd Cæta overlook the pass,

And far beyond o'er half the furge below

Their horrid umbrage cast. Across the mouth 475

An ancient bulwark of the Phocians stands,

A wall with gates and tow'rs. The Locrian force

Was marching forward. Them I pass'd to greet

Demophilus of Thespia, who had pitch'd

Seven hundred spears before th' important fence. 480

His brother's son attends the rev'rend chief,

Young Dythyrambus. He for noble deeds,

Yet more for temperance of mind renown'd,

In early bloom with brightest honours shines,

Nor wantons in the blaze. Here Agis spake. 485

WELL hast thou painted that illustrious youth,
 He is my host at Theſpia. Though adorn'd
 With various wreaths, by fame, by fortune bleſs'd,
 His gentle virtues take from Envy's lips
 Their blaſting venom; and her baneful eye 490
 Strives on his worth to ſmile. In ſilence all
 Again remain, when Alpheus thus proceeds.

PLATÆA's choſen veterans I ſaw,
 Small in their number, matchleſs in their fame.
 Diomedon the leader. Keen his ſword 495
 At Marathon was felt, where Aſia bled.
 Theſe guard Thermopylæ. Among the hills,
 Unknown to ſtrangers winds an upper ſtreight,
 Which by a thouſand Phocians is ſecur'd.

ERE theſe brave Greeks I quitted, in the bay 500
 A ſtately chieftain of th' Athenian fleet
 Arriv'd. I join'd him. Copious in thy praiſe
 He utter'd rapture, but auſterely blam'd
 Laconia's tardy counſels; while the ſhips
 Of Athens long had ſtemm'd Eubœan tides, 505
 Which flow not diſtant from our future poſt.
 This was the far-fam'd Æſchylus, by Mars,
 By Phœbus lov'd. Parnaffus him proclaims
 The firſt of Attic poets, him the plains
 Of Marathon a ſoldier, try'd in arms. 510

WELL may Athenians murmur, ſaid the king.
 Too long hath Sparta ſlumber'd on her ſhield.
 By morn beyond the Iſthmus we will ſpread
 A gen'rous banner. In Laconian ſtrains
 Of Alcman and Terpander lives the fame 515
 Of our forefathers. Let our deeds attraſt

The

The brighter muse of Athens in the song
Of Æschylus divine. Now frame thy choice.
Share in our fate ; or, hast'ning home, report,
How much already thy discerning mind, 520
Thy active limbs have merited from me,
How serv'd thy country. From th' impatient lips.
Of Alpheus swift these fervid accents broke.

I HAVE not measur'd such a tract of land,
Have not, untir'd, beheld the setting sun, 525
Nor through the shade of midnight urg'd my steps
To animate the Grecians, that myself
Might be exempt from warlike toil, or death.
Return ? Ah ! no. A second time my speed
Shall visit thee, Thermopylæ. My limbs 530
Shall at thy side, Leonidas, obtain
An honourable grave. And oh ! amid
His country's perils, if a Spartan breast
May feel a private sorrow, fierce revenge
I seek not only for th' insulted state, 535
But for a brother's wrongs. A younger hope,
Than I, and Maron, blest'd our father's years,
Child of his age, and Polydorus nam'd.
His mind, while tender in his op'ning prime, •
Was bent to strenuous virtue. Gen'rous scorn 540
Of pain, or danger taught his early strength
To struggle patient with severest toils.
Oft, when inclement winter chill'd the air,
When frozen show'rs had swoln Eurotas' stream,
Amid th' impetuous channel would he plunge 545
To breast the torrent. On a fatal day,
As in the sea his active limbs he bath'd,

A savage

A savage corsair of the Persian king
 My brother naked and defenceless bore,
 Ev'n in my sight, to Asia ; there to waste 550
 With all the promise of its growing worth
 His youth in bondage. Tedious were the tale,
 Should I recount my pains, my father's woes,
 The days, he wept ; the sleepless nights, he beat
 His aged bosom. And shall Alpheus' spear 555
 Be absent from Thermopylæ, nor claim,
 O Polydorus, vengeance for thy wrongs
 In that first slaughter of the barb'rous foe ?

HERE interpos'd Dieneces. Their hands
 He grasp'd, and cordial transport thus express'd. 560

O THAT Lycurgus from the shades might rise
 To praise the virtue, which his laws inspire !

THUS till the dead of night these heroes pass'd
 The hours in friendly converse, and enjoy'd
 Each other's virtue. Happiest of men ! 565
 At length with gentle heaviness the pow'r
 Of sleep invades their eyelids, and constrains
 Their magnanimity and zeal to rest ;
 When, sliding down the hemisphere, the moon
 Immers'd in midnight shade her silver head. 570

E N D O F T H E F I R S T B O O K.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE SECOND.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas, on his approach to the Isthmus, is met by the leaders of the troops, sent from other Grecian states, and by the deputies, who compos'd the Isthmian council. He harangues them; then proceeds in conjunction with these forces towards Thermopylæ. On the first day he is join'd by Dythyrambus; on the third he reaches a valley in Locris, where he is entertain'd by Oileus, the public host, of the Lacedæmonian state; and the next morning is accompany'd by him in a car to the temple of Pan: he finds Medon there, the son of Oileus, and commander of two thousand Locrians, already posted at Thermopylæ, and by him is inform'd, that the army of Xerxes is in sight of the pass.

AURORA spreads her purple beams around,
When move the Spartans. Their approach
is known.

The Isthmian council, and the diff'rent chiefs,
Who lead th' auxiliar bands, advance to meet
Leonidas; Eupalamus the strong, 5
Alcmæon, Clonius, Diophantus brave
With Hegesander. At their head is seen

Ariflobulus,

Aristobulus, whom Mycenæ's ranks
 Obey, Mycenæ once august in pow'r,
 In splendid wealth, and vaunting still the name 10
 Of Agamemnon. To Laconia's king
 The chieftain spake. Leonidas, survey
 Mycenæ's race. Should ev'ry other Greek
 Be aw'd by Xerxes, and his eastern host,
 Believe not, we can fear, deriv'd from those, 15
 Who once conducted o'er the foaming surge
 The strength of Greece ; who desert left the fields
 Of ravag'd Asia, and her proudest walls
 From their foundations levell'd to the ground.

LEONIDAS replies not, but his voice 20
 Directs to all. Illustrious warriors, hail !
 Who thus undaunted signalize your faith,
 Your gen'rous ardour in the common cause.
 But you, whose counsels prop the Grecian state
 O venerable synod, who consign 25
 To our protecting sword, the gate of Greece,
 Thrice hail ! Whate'er by valour we obtain,
 Your wisdom must preserve. With piercing eyes
 Contemplate ev'ry city, and discern
 Their various tempers. Some with partial care 30
 To guard their own neglect the public weal.
 Unmov'd and cold are others. Terror here,
 Corruption there presides. O fire the brave
 To gen'ral efforts in the gen'ral cause.
 Confirm the wav'ring. Animate the cold, 35
 The timid. Watch the faithless. Some betray
 Themselves and Greece. Their perfidy prevent,
 Or call them back to honour. Let us all

Be

Book II. L E O N I D A S. 23

Be link'd in sacred union, and this land
May face the world's whole multitude in arms. 40

If for the spoil, by Paris borne to Troy,
A thousand keels the Hellespont o'erspread;
Shall not again confederated Greece

Be rous'd to battle, and to freedom give
What once she gave to fame? Behold, we haste 45

To stop th' invading tyrant. Till we fall,
He shall not pour his myriads on your plains.
But as the gods conceal, how long our strength
May stand unvanquish'd, or how soon may yield;
Waste not a moment, till consenting Greece 50
Range all her free-born numbers in the field.

LEONIDAS concluded. Awful stepp'd
Before the sage assembly one supreme
And old in office, who address'd the king.

THY bright example ev'ry heart unites. 55
From thee her happiest omens Greece derives
Of concord, safety, liberty and fame.
Go then, O first of mortals, go, impress
Amaze and terror on the barb'rous host;
The free-born Greeks instructing life to deem 60
Less dear than honour, and their country's cause.

THIS heard, Leonidas, thy secret soul,
Exulting, tasted of the sweet reward
Due to thy name through endless time. Once more
His eyes he turn'd, and view'd in rapt'rous thought 65
His native land, which he alone can save;
Then summon'd all his majesty, and o'er
The Isthmus trod. The phalanx moves behind
In deep arrangement. So th' imperial Ship

With

With stately bulk along the heaving tide 70
In military pomp conducts the pow'r
Of some proud navy, bounding from the port
To bear the vengeance of a mighty state
Against a tyrant's walls. Till sultry noon
They march; when halting, as they take repast, 75
Across the plain before them they descry
A troop of Thespians. One above the rest
In eminence precedes. His glitt'ring shield,
Whose gold-embazon'd orb collects the beams,
Cast by meridian Phœbus from his throne, 80
Flames like another sun. A snowy plume,
With wanton curls disporting in the breeze,
Floats o'er his dazzling casque. On nearer view
Beneath the radiant honours of his crest
A countenance of youth in rosy prime, 85
And manly sweetness won the fix'd regard
Of each beholder. With a modest grace
He came respectful tow'rd the king, and shew'd,
That all idea of his own desert
Were sunk in veneration. So the god 90
Of light salutes his empyreal fire;
When from his altar in th' embow'ring grove
Of paimy Delos, or the hallow'd bound
Of Tenedos, or Claros, where he hears
In hymns his praises from the sons of men, 95
He re-ascends the high, Olympian seats:
Such reverential homage on his brow.
O'erhading, softens his effulgent bloom
With loveliness and grace. The king receives
Th' illustrious Thespian thus. My willing tongue 100
Would

Would style thee Dithyrambus. Thou dost bear
All in thy aspect to become that name,
Renown'd for worth and valour. O reveal
Thy birth, thy charge. Whoe'er thou art, my soul
Desires to know thee, and would call thee friend. 105

—To him the youth. O bulwark of our weal,
My name is Dithyrambus; which the lips
Of some benevolent, some gen'rous friend
To thee have sounded in a partial strain,
And thou hast heard with favour. In thy sight 110
I stand, deputed by the Thespian chief,
The Theban, Locrian, by the fam'd in war,
Diomedon, to hasten thy approach.
Three days will bring the hostile pow'rs in view.

He said. The ready standards are uprear'd. 115
By zeal enforc'd, till ev'ning shadows fall,
The march continues, then by day-spring sweeps
The earliest dews. The van, by Agis led,
Displays the grisly face of battle rough
With spears, obliquely trail'd in dreadful length 120
Along th' indented way. Beside him march'd
His gallant, Thespian host. The center boasts
Leonidas the leader, who retains
The good Megistias near him. In the rear
Dieneces commanded, who in charge 125
Kept Menalippus, offspring of his friend,
For these instructions. Let thine eye, young man,
Dwell on the order of our varying march;
As champain, valley, mountain, or defile
Require a change. The eastern tyrant thus 130
Conducts not his Barbarians like the sands

In number. Yet the discipline of Greece
They will encounter feeble, as the sands,
Dash'd on a rock, and scatter'd in their fall.

To him th' enquiring youth. The martial tread, 135
The flute's slow warble, both in just accord,
Entrance my senses; but let wonder ask,
Why is that tender vehicle of sound
Preferr'd in war by Sparta? Other Greeks
To more sonorous music rush in fight. 140

SON of my friend, Dieneces rejoins,
Well dost thou note. I praise thee. Sparta's law
With human passions, source of human woes,
Maintains perpetual strife. She sternly curbs
Our infant hearts, till passion yields its seat 145
To principle and order. Music too,
By Spartans lov'd, is temper'd by the law;
Still to her plan subservient melts in notes,
Which cool and soothe, not irritate and warm.
Thus by habitual abstinence, apply'd 150
To ev'ry sense, suppressing nature's fire,
By modes of duty, not by ardour sway'd,
O'er each impetuous enemy abroad,
At home o'er vice and pleasure we prevail.

O MIGHT I merit a Laconian name! 155
The Acarnanian answer'd. But explain,
What is the land, we traverse? What the hill,
Whose parted summit is a spacious void
Admits a bed of clouds? And gracious tell,
Whose are those suits of armour which I see 160
Borne by two Helots. At the questions pleas'd,
Dieneces continues. Those belong

To Alpheus and his brother. Light of foot,
 They, disencumber'd, all at large precede
 This pond'rous band. They guide a troop of slaves, 165
 Our missile-weapon'd Helots, to observe,
 Provide, forewarn, and obstacles remove.

This tract is Phocis. That divided hill
 Is fam'd Parnassus. Thence the voice divine
 Was sent by Phœbus, summoning to death 170
 The king of Sparta. From his fruitful blood
 A crop will spring of victory to Greece.

AND these three hundred high in birth and rank,
 All citizens of Sparta . . . cries the youth,
 They all must bleed, Dieneses subjoins, 175
 All with their leader. So the law decrees.

To whom with earnest looks the gen'rous youth.
 Wilt thou not place me in that glorious hour
 Close to thy buckler? Gratitude will brace
 Thy people's arm to manifest the force 180
 Of thy instruction. Menalippus, no,
 Return to the chief. Not thou of Spartan breed,
 Not call'd to perish. Thou unwedded too
 Wouldst leave no race behind thee. Live to praise,
 Live to enjoy our salutary fall. 185
 Reply a needless. See, the sun descends.
 The army halts. I trust thee with a charge,
 Son of Megistias. In my name command
 Th' attendant Helots to erect our camp,
 We pitch our tents in Locris. Quick the youth 190
 His charge accomplish'd. From a gen'rous meal,
 Where at the call of Alpheus Locris show'r'd
 Her Amalthean plenty on her friends,

The fated warriors soon in slumber lose
 The memory of toil. His watchful round 195
 Dienece with Menalippus takes.

THE moon rode high and clear. Her light benign
 To their pleas'd eyes a rural dwelling shew'd,
 All unadorn'd, but seemly. Either side
 Was fenc'd by trees high-shadowing. The front 200
 Look'd on a chrystal pool, by feather'd tribes
 At ev'ry dawn frequented. From the springs
 A small redundancy fed a shallow brook,
 O'er smoothest pebbles rippling just to wake,
 Not startle silence, and the ear of night 205
 Entice to listen undisturb'd. Around,
 The grass was cover'd by reposing sheep,
 Whose drowsy guard no longer bay'd the moon.

THE warriors stopp'd, contemplating the seat
 Of rural quiet. Suddenly a swain 210
 Steps forth. His fingers touch the breathing reed.
 Uprise the fleecy train. Each faithful dog
 Is rous'd. All heedful of the wonted sound
 Their known conductor follow. Slow behind
 Th' observing warriors move. Ere long they reach 215
 A broad and verdant circle, thick inclos'd
 With birches straight and tall, whose glossy rind
 Is clad in silver from Diana's car.
 The ground was holy, and the central spot
 An altar bore to Pan. Beyond the orb 220
 Of skreening trees th' external circuit swarm'd
 With sheep and bees, each neighb'ring hamlet's wealth
 Collected. Thither soon the swain arriv'd,

Whom,

Whom, by the name of Melibœus hail'd,
 A peasant throng furrounded. As their chief, 225
 He nigh the altar to his rural friends
 Address'd these words. O sent from diff'rent lords
 With contribution to the public wants,
 Time presses. God of peasants, bless our course!
 Speed to the slow-pac'd ox, for once impart! 230
 That o'er these vallies, cool'd by dewy night,
 We to our summons true, ere noon-tide blaze,
 May join Oileus, and his praise obtain.

He ceas'd. To rustic madrigals and pipes,
 Combin'd with bleating notes, and tinkling bells, 235
 With clamour shrill from busy tongues of dogs,
 Or hollow-sounding from the deep-mouth'd ox,
 Along the valley herd and flock are driv'n
 Successive, halting oft to harmless spoil
 Of slow'rs and herbage, springing in their sight. 240
 While Melibœus marshall'd with address
 The inoffensive host, unseen in shades
 Dieneses applauded, and the youth
 Of Menalippus caution'd. Let no word
 Impede the careful peasant. On his charge 245
 Depends our welfare. Diligent and staid
 He suits his godlike master. Thou wilt see
 That righteous hero soon. Now sleep demands
 Our debt to nature. On a carpet dry
 Of moss beneath a wholesome beech they lay, 250
 Arm'd, as they were. Their slumber short retires
 With night's last shadow. At their warning rous'd,
 The troops proceed. Th' admiring eye of youth
 In Menalippus caught the morning rays

To guide its travel o'er the landscape wide 255
 Of cultivated hillocks, dales and lawns,
 Where mansions, hamlets interpos'd; where domes
 Rose to their gods through consecrated shades.
 He then exclaims. O say, can Jove devote
 These fields to ravage, those abodes to flames? 260

THE Spartan answers. Ravage, sword and fire
 Must be endur'd, as incidental ills.
 Suffice it, these invaders soon, or late,
 Will leave this soil more fertile by their blood
 With spoils abundant to rebuild the fanes. 265
 Precarious benefits are these, thou seest,
 So fram'd by heav'n; but virtue is a good,
 No foe can spoil, and lasting to the grave.

BESIDE the public way an oval fount
 Of marble sparkled with a silver spray 270
 Of falling rills, collected from above.
 The army halted, and their hollow casques
 Dipp'd in the lympid stream. Behind it rose
 An edifice, compos'd of native roots,
 And oaken trunks of knotted girth unwrought. 275
 Within were beds of moss. Old, batter'd arms
 Hung from the roof. The curious chiefs approach.
 These words, engraven on a tablet rude,
 Megistias reads; the rest in silence heard.
 "Yon marble fountain, by Oïleus plac'd, 280
 "To thirsty lips in living water flows;
 "For weary steps he fram'd this cool retreat;
 "A grateful off'ring here to rural peace,
 "His dinted shield, his helmet he resign'd.
 "O passer, if born to noble deeds 385
 "Thou:

"Thou wouldst obtain perpetual grace from Jove,
 "Devote thy vigour to heroic toils,
 "And thy decline to hospitable cares.
 "Rest here; then seek Oïleus in his vale."

O JOVE, burst forth Leonidas, thy grace 290
 'Tis large and various. Length of days and bliss
 To him thou giv'st, to me a shorten'd term,
 Nor yet less happy. Grateful we confess
 Thy diff'rent bounties, measur'd full to both.
 Come let us seek Oïleus in his vale. 295

THE word is giv'n. The heavy phalanx moves.
 The light-pac'd Helots long, ere morning dawn'd,
 Had recommenc'd their progress. They o'ertook
 Blithe Melibœus in a spacious vale,
 The fruitfulest in Locris, ere the sun 300
 Shot forth his noon-tide beams. On either side
 A surface scarce perceptibly ascends.
 Luxuriant vegetation crouds the soil
 With trees close rang'd and mingling. Rich the loads
 Of native fruitage to the sight reveal 305
 Their vig'rous nurture. There the flushing peach,
 The apple, citron, almond, pear and date,
 Pomegranates, purple mulberry and fig
 From interlacing branches mix their hues
 And scents, the passenger's delight; but leave 310
 In the mid-vale a pasture long and large,
 Exuberant in vivid verdure cropp'd
 By herds, by flocks innum'rous. Neighb'ring knolls
 Are speckled o'er with cots, whose humble roofs
 To herdsmen, shepherds, and laborious hinds 315
 Once yielded rest unbroken, till the name

Of Xerxes shook their quiet. Yet this day
 Was festive. Swains and damsels, youth and age,
 From toil, from home enlarg'd, disporting, fill'd
 Th' enliven'd meadow. Under ev'ry shade 320
 A hoary minstrel fat; the maidens danc'd;
 Flocks bleated; oxen low'd; the horses neigh'd;
 With joy the vale resounded; terror fled;
 Leonidas was nigh. The welcome news
 By Melibæus, hast'ning to his lord, 325
 Was loudly told. The Helots too appear'd.
 While with his brother Alpheus thus discours'd.

IN this fair valley old Oïleus dwells,
 The first of Locrians, of Laconia's state
 The public host. Yon large pavilions mark. 330
 They promise welcome. Thither let us bend,
 There tell our charge. This said, they both advance.
 A hoary band receives them. One, who seem'd
 In rank, in age superior, wav'd his hand
 To Melibæus, standing near, and spake. 335

By this my faithful messenger I learn,
 That you are friends. Nor yet th' invader's foot
 Hath pass'd our confines. Else, o'ercast by time,
 My sight would scarce distinguish friend, or foe,
 A Grecian, or Barbarian. Alpheus then. 340

WE come from Lacedæmon, of our king
 Leonidas forerunners. Is he nigh?
 The cordial senior tenderly exclaims.
 I am Oïleus. Him a beardless boy
 I knew in Lacedæmon. Twenty years 345
 Are since elaps'd. He scarce remembers me.
 But I will feast him, as becomes my zeal,
 Him and his army. You, my friends, repose.

THEY

THEY sit. He still discourses. Spartan guests,
In me an aged soldier you behold. 350
From Ajax, fam'd in Agamemnon's war,
Oilean Ajax flows my vital stream,
Unmix'd with his presumption. I have borne
The highest functions in the Locrian state,
Not with dishonour. Self-dismis'd, my age 355
Hath in this valley on my own demesne
Liv'd tranquil, not recluse. My comrades these,
Old magistrates and warriors like myself,
Releas'd from public care, with me retir'd
To rural quiet. Through our last remains 360
Of time in sweet garrulity we slide,
Recounting pass'd achievements of our prime :
Nor wanting lib'ral means for lib'ral deeds,
Here bless'd, here blessing, we reside. These flocks,
These herds and pastures, these our num'rous hinds, 365
And poverty, hence exil'd, may divulge
Our generous abundance. We can spread
A banquet for an army. By the state
Once more entreated, we accept a charge,
To age well-suited. By our watchful care 370
The goddess Plenty in your tents shall dwell.*

HE scarce had finish'd, when the ensigns broad
Of Lacedæmon's phalanx down the vale
Were seen to wave, unfolding at the sound
Of flutes, soft-warbling in th' expressive mood 375
Of Dorian sweetness, unadorn'd. Around,
In notes of welcome ev'ry shepherd tun'd
His sprightly reed. The damsels shew'd their hair,
Diversify'd

Diversify'd with flowrets. Garlands gay,
 Rush-woven baskets, glowing with the dyes 380
 Of amaranths, of jafmin, rofes, pinks
 And violets they carry, tripping light
 Before the steps of grinly-featur'd Mars
 To blend the fmiles of Flora with his frown.
 Leonidas they chaunt in fylvan lays, 385
 Him the defender of their meads and groves,
 Him, more than Pan, a guardian to their flocks.
 While Philomela, in her poplar fhade
 Awaken'd, ftrains her emulating throat,
 And joins with liquid trills the fwelling founds. 390

BEHOLD, Oileus and his ancient train
 Accoft Laconia's king, whose looks and words
 Confefs remembrance of the Locrian chief.

THRICE hail ! Oileus, Sparta's noble hof,
 Thou art of old acquainted with her fons, 395
 Their laws, their manners. Mufical, as brave,
 Train'd to delight in fmooth Terpander's lay,
 In Alcman's Dorian meafure, we enjoy
 In thy melodious vale th' unlabour'd ftrains
 Of rural pipes, to nightingales attun'd. 400
 Our heart-felt gladnefs deems the golden age
 Subfifting, where thou govern'ft. Still thefe tones
 Of joy continu'd may thy dwellings hear !
 Still may this plenty, unmolefted, crown
 The favour'd diftrict ! May thy rev'rend duft 405
 Have peaceful fhelter in thy father's tomb !
 Kind heav'n, that merit to my fword impart !

By joy uplifted, forth Oileus broke.
 Thou doft recal me then ! O fent to guard

Thefe

Book II. L E O N I D A S. 35

These fruits from spoil, these hoary locks from
shame, 410

Permit thy weary'd soldiers to partake
Of Locrian plenty. Enter thou my tents,
Thou and thy captains. I salute them all.

THE hero full of dignity and years,
Once bold in action, placid now in ease, 415
Ev'n by his look, benignly cast around,
Gives lassitude relief. With native grace,
With heart-effus'd complacency the king
Accepts the lib'ral welcome; while his troops,
To relaxation and repast dismiss'd, 420
Pitch on the wounded green their bristling spears.

STILL is the evening. Under chestnut shades
With interweaving poplars spacious stands
A well-fram'd tent. There calm the heroes sit,
The genial board enjoy, and feast the mind 425
On sage discourse; while thus Oïleus clos'd.

BETHOLD, night lifts her signal to invoke
That friendly god, who owns the drowsy wand.
To Mercury this last libation flows.
Farewell till morn. They separate, they sleep 430
All, but Oïleus, who forsakes the tent.
On Melibœus in these words he calls.

Approach, my faithful friend. To him the swain.
Thy bondman hears thy call. The chief replies
Loud for the gath'ring peasantry to heed. 435

COME, Melibœus, it is surely time,
That my repeated gift, the name of friend
Thou should'st accept. The name of bondman wounds
My ear. Be free. No longer, best of men,
Reject that boon, nor let my feeble head, 440
To

To thee a debtor, as to gracious heav'n,
 Descend and sleep unthankful in the grave.
 Though yielding nature daily feels decay;
 Thou dost prevent all care. The gods estrange
 Pain from my pillow, have secur'd my breast 445
 From weeds too oft in aged soils profuse,
 From self-tormenting petulance and pride,
 From jealousy and envy at the fame
 Of younger men. Leonidas will dim
 My former lustre, as that silver orb 450
 Outshines the meanest star; and I rejoice.
 O Melibœus, these elect of Jove
 To certain death advance. Immortal pow'rs!
 How social, how endearing is their speech!
 How flow in lib'ral cheerfulness their hearts! 455
 To such a period verging men like these
 Age well may envy, and that envy take
 The genuine shape of virtue. Let their span,
 Of earthly being, while it lasts, contain
 Each earthly joy. Till blest'd Elysium spread 460
 Her ever-blooming, inexhausted stores
 To their glad sight, be mine the grateful task
 To drain my plenty. From the vaulted caves
 Our vessels large of well-fermented wine,
 From all our gran'ries lift the treasur'd corn. 465
 Go, load the groaning axles. Nor forget
 With garments new to greet Melissa's nymphs:
 To her a triple change of vestments bear
 With twenty lambs, and twenty speckled kids.
 Be it your care, my peasants, some to aid 470
 Him your director, others to select

Five hundred oxen, thrice a thousand sheep,
Of lusty swains a thousand. Let the morn,
When first she blushes, see my will perform'd.

THEY heard. Their lord's injunctions to fulfil 475
Was their ambition. He, unresting, mounts
A ready car. The coursers had enroll'd
His name in Isthmian and Nemean games.
By moon-light, floating on the splendid reins,
He o'er the busy vale intent is borne 480
From place to place, o'erlooks, directs, forgets,
That he is old. Mean time the shades of night,
Retiring, wake Dienece. He gives
The word. His pupil seconds. Ev'ry band
Is arm'd. Day opens. Sparta's king appears. 485
Oileus greets him. In his radiant car
The senior stays reluctant; but his guest
So wills in Spartan reverence to age.
Then spake the Locrian. To assist thy camp
A chosen band of peasants I detach. 490
I trust thy valour. Doubt not thou my care;
Nor doubt that swain. Oileus, speaking, look'd
On Melibœus. Skilful he commands
These hinds. Him wise, him faithful I have prov'd
More, than Eumæus to Laertes' son. 495
To him th' Cætæan woods, their devious tracks
Are known, each rill and fountain. Near the pass
Two thousand Locrians wilt thou find encamp'd,
My eldest born their leader, Medon nam'd,
Well-exercis'd in arms. My daughter dwells 500
On Cæta. Sage Melissa she is call'd,
Enlighten'd priestess of the tuneful nine.

She haply may accost thee. Thou wilt lend
 An ear. Not fruitless are Melissa's words.
 Now, servants, bring the sacred wine. Obey'd, 505
 He, from, his seat uprising, thus proceeds.

Lo! from this chalice a libation pure
 To Mars, to Grecian liberty and laws,
 To their protector, eleutherian Jove,
 To his nine daughters, who record the brave, 510
 To thy renown, Leonidas, I pour;
 And take an old man's benediction too.

He stopp'd. Affection, struggling in his heart,
 Burst forth again. Illustrious guest, afford
 Another hour. That slender space of time 515
 Yield to my sole possession. While the troops,
 Already glitt'ring down the dewy vale,
 File through its narrow'd outlet; near my side
 Deign to be carry'd, and my talk endure.

THE king, well-pleas'd, ascends. Slow move the
 steeds 520
 Behind the rear. Oileus grasps his hand,
 Then in the fulness of his soul pursues.

THEY veneration for Laconia's laws
 That I may strengthen, may to rapture warm,
 Hear me display the melancholy fruits 525
 Of lawless will. When o'er the Lydian plains
 Th' innumerable tents of Xerxes spread,
 His vassal, Pythius, who in affluent means
 Surpasses me, as that Barbarian prince
 Thou dost in virtue, entertain'd the host, 530
 And proffer'd all his treasures. These the king
 Refusing, ev'n augmented from his own.

An act of fancy, not habitual grace,
 A sparkling vapour through the regal gloom
 Of cruelty and pride. He now prepar'd 535
 To march from Sardis, when with humble tears
 The good old man besought him. Let the king
 Propitious hear a parent. In thy train
 I have five sons. Ah! leave my eldest born,
 Thy future vassal, to sustain my age! 540
 The tyrant fell reply'd. Presumptuous man,
 Who art my slave, in this tremendous war,
 Is not my person hazarded, my race,
 My consort? Former merit saves from death
 Four of thy offspring. Him, so dearly priz'd, 545
 Thy folly hath destroy'd. His body straight
 Was hewn asunder. By the public way
 On either side a bleeding half was cast,
 And millions pass'd between. O Spartan king,
 Taught to revere the sanctity of laws, 550
 The acts of Xerxes with thy own compare,
 His fame with thine. The curses of mankind
 Give him renown. He marches to destroy,
 But thou to save. Behold the trees are bent,
 Each eminence is loaded thick with crouds, 555
 From cots, from ev'ry hamlet pour'd abroad,
 To bless thy steps, to celebrate thy praise.

OFTTIMES the king his decent brow inclin'd,
 Mute and obsequious to an elder's voice,
 Which through th' instructed ear, unceasing flow'd 560
 In eloquence and knowledge. Scarce an hour
 Was fled. The narrow dale was left behind
 A causeway broad disclos'd an ancient pile

Of military fame. A trophy large,
 Compact with crested morions, targets rude, 565
 With spears and corselets, dimm'd by eating age,
 Stood near a lake pellucid, smooth, profound,
 Of circular expanse; whose bosom shew'd
 A green-slop'd island, figur'd o'er with flow'rs,
 And from its center lifting high to view 570
 A marble chapel, on the massy strength
 Of Doric columns rais'd. A full-wrought freeze
 Display'd the sculptor's art. In solemn pomp
 Of obelisks and busts, and story'd urns
 Sepulchral mansions of illustrious dead 575
 Were scatter'd round, o'ercast with shadows black
 Of yew and cypress. In a serious note
 Oileus, pointing, opens new discourse.

BENEATH yon turf my ancestors repose.
 Oilean Ajax singly was depriv'd 580
 Of fun'ral honours there. With impious lust
 He slain'd Minerva's temple. From the gulph
 Of briny waters by their god preserv'd,
 That god he brav'd. He lies beneath a rock,
 Py Neptune's trident in his wrath o'erturn'd. 585
 Shut from Elysium for a hundred years,
 The hero's ghost bewail'd his oozy tomb.
 A race more pious on th' Oilean house
 Felicity have drawn. To ev'ry god
 I owe my bliss, my early fame to Pan. 590
 Once on the margin of that silent pool
 In their nocturnal camps Barbarians lay,
 Awaiting morn to violate the dead.
 My youth was fir'd. I summon'd from their cots
 A rustic

A rustic host. We sacrific'd to Pan, 600
 Affail'd th' unguarded ruffians in his name.

He with his terrors smote their yielding hearts.
 Not one surviv'd the fury of our fwains.

Rich was the pillage. Hence that trophy rose;
 Of costly blocks constructed, hence that fane, 605
 Inferib'd to Pan th' armipotent. O king,

Be to an old man's vanity benign.

This frowning emblem of terrific war
 Proclaims the ardour and exploits of youth.

This to Barbarian strangers, ent'ring Greece, 610
 Shews, what I was. The marble fount, thou saw'st,
 Of living water, whose transparent flow

Reliev'd thy march in yester sultry sun,
 The cell, which offer'd rest on beds of moss,
 Shew, what I am; to Grecian neighbours shew 615
 The hospitality of age. O age,

Where are thy graces, but in lib'ral deeds,
 In bland deportment? Would thy furrow'd cheeks
 Lose the deformity of time? Let smiles
 Dwell in thy wrinkles. Then, rever'd by youth, 620

Thy feeble steps will find - - - Abruptly here,

He paus'd. A manly warrior full in fight
 Beside the trophy on his target lean'd,
 Unknown to Sparta's leader, who address'd
 His rev'rend host. Thou pausest. Let me ask, 625

Whom do I see, resembling in his form
 A demigod? In transport then the sage.

It is my son, discover'd by his shield,
 Thy brave auxiliar, Medon. He sustains
 My ancient honours in his native state, 630

Which kindly chose my offspring to replace
Their long-sequester'd chief. Heart-winning guest !
My life, a tide of joy, which never knew
A painful ebb, beyond its wonted mark
Flows in thy converse. Could a wish prevail, 635
My long and happy course should finish here.

THE chariot rested. Medon now approach'd,
Saluting thus Leonidas. O king
Of warlike Sparta, Xerxes' host in fight
Begin to spread their multitude, and fill 640
The spacious Malian plain. The king replies.

ACCEPT, illustrious messenger, my thanks.
With such a brave assistant, as the son
Of great Oileus, more assur'd I go
To face those numbers. With his godlike friend 645
The father, now dismounting from his car,
Embraces Medon. In a sliding bark
They all were wafted to the island fane,
Erected by Oileus, and enrich'd
With his engrav'd achievements. Thence the eye 650
Of Sparta's gen'ral in extensive scope
Contemplates each battalion, as they wind
Along the pool ; whose limpid face reflects
Their weapons, glist'ning in the early sun.
Them he to Pan armipotent commends, 655
His favour thus invoking. God, whose pow'r
By rumour vain, or echo's empty voice
Can sink the valiant in desponding fear,
Can disarray whole armies, smile on these,
Thy worshippers. Thy own Arcadians guard. 660
Through thee Oileus triumph'd. On his son,
On

On me look down. Our shields auxiliar join
 Against profane Barbarians, who insult
 The Grecian gods, and meditate the fall
 Of this thy shrine. He said, and now intent 665
 To leave the island, on Oileus call'd.

HE, Medon answer'd, by his joy and zeal
 Too high transported, and discoursing long,
 Felt on his drowsy lids a balmy down
 Of heaviness descending. He, unmark'd 670
 Amid thy pious commerce with the god,
 Was silently remov'd. The good old chief
 On carpets, rais'd by tender, menial hands,
 Calm in the secret sanctuary is laid.

HIS hast'ning step Leonidas restrains, 675
 Thus fervent prays. O Maia's son, best pleas'd,
 When calling slumber to a virtuous eye,
 Watch o'er my venerable friend. Thy balm
 He wants, exhausted by his love to me.
 Sweet sleep, thou soft'nest that intruding pang, 680
 Which gen'rous breasts, so parting, must admit.

HE said, embark'd, relanded. To his side
 Inviting Medon, he rejoin'd the host. ,

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE THIRD.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas arrives at Thermopylæ, about noon, on the fourth day after his departure from the Isthmus. He is receiv'd by Demophilus, the commander of Thespia, and by Anaxander the Theban, treacherously recommending Epialtes, a Malian, who seeks, by a pompous description of the Persian power, to intimidate the Grecian leaders, as they are viewing the enemy's camp, from the top of Mount Oeta. He is answer'd by Dieneces and Diomedon. Xerxes sends Tigranes and Phraortes to the Grecian camp, who are dismiss'd by Leonidas, and conducted back by Dithyrambus and Diomedon; which last, incens'd at the arrogance of Tigranes, treats him with contempt and menaces. This occasions a challenge to single combat between Diomedon and Tigranes, Dithyrambus and Phraortes. Epialtes after a conference with Anaxander, declares his intention of returning to Xerxes. Leonidas dispatches Agis with Melibæus, a faithful slave of Oïeus, and high in the estimation of his lord, to view a body of Phocians, who had been posted at a distance from Thermopylæ, for the defence of another pass in Mount Oeta.

Now

NOW in the van Leonidas appears,
With Medon still conferring. Hast thou heard,
He said, among th' innumerable foes
What chiefs are most distinguish'd? Might we trust
To fame, reply'd the Locrian, Xerxes boasts 5
His ablest, bravest counsellor and chief
In Artemisia, Caria's matchless queen.
To old Darius benefits had bound
Her lord, herself to Xerxes. Not compell'd,
Except by magnanimity, she leads 10
The best-appointed squadron in his fleet.
No female softness Artemisia knows,
But in maternal love. Her widow'd hand
With equity and firmness for her son
Administers the sway. Of Doric race 15
She still retains the spirit, which from Greece
Her ancestors transplanted. Other chiefs
Are all Barbarians, little known to fame,
Save one, whom Sparta hath herself supply'd,
Not less, than Demaratus, once her king, 20
An exile now. Leonidas rejoins.

SON of Oïleus, like thy father wife,
Like him partake my confidence. Thy words
Recal an æra, sad'ning all my thoughts.
That injur'd Spartan shar'd the regal sway 25
With one—Alas! my brother, eldest born,
Unblest'd by nature, favour'd by no god,
Cleomenes. Insanity of mind,
Malignant passions, impious acts deform'd
A life, concluded by his own fell hand. 30

Against

Against his colleague envious he suborn'd
 Leutychides. Him perjury and fraud
 Plac'd on the seat, by Demaratus held
 Unstain'd in lustre. Here Oïleus' son.

My future service only can repay 35
 Thy confidential friendship. Let us close
 The gloomy theme. Thermopylæ is nigh.
 Each face in transport glows. Now Cæta rear'd
 His tow'ring forehead. With impatient steps
 On rush'd the phalanx, sounding pæans high ; 40
 As if the present deity of fame
 Had from the summit shewn her dazzling form,
 With wreaths unfading on her temples bound,
 Her adamantine trumpet in her hand
 To celebrate their valour. From the van 45
 Leonidas advances like the sun,
 When through dividing clouds his presence stays
 Their sweeping rack, and stills the clam'rous wind.
 The army silent halt. Their ensigns fan
 The air no longer. Motionless their spears. 50
 His eye reveals the ardour of his soul,
 Which thus finds utt'rance from his eager lips.

ALL hail ! Thermopylæ, and you, the pow'rs,
 Presiding here. All hail ! ye sylvan gods,
 Ye fountain nymphs, who send your lucid rills 55
 In broken murmurs down the rugged steep.
 Receive us, O benignant, and support
 The cause of Greece. Conceal the secret paths,
 Which o'er these crags, and through their forests wind,
 Untrod by human feet, and trac'd alone 60
 By your immortal footsteps. O defend

Your

Your own recesses, nor let impious war
 Profane the solemn silence of your groves
 Then on your hills your praises shall you hear
 From those, whose deeds shall tell th' approving world 65
 That not to undeservers did ye grant
 Your high protect. You, my valiant friends,
 Now rouse the gen'rous spirit, which inflames
 Your hearts ; exert the vigour of your arms :
 That in the bosoms of the brave and free 70
 Your memorable actions may survive ;
 May sound delightful in the ear of time,
 Long, as blue Neptune beats the Malian strand,
 Or those tall cliffs erect their shaggy tops
 So near to heav'n, your monuments of fame. 75

As in some torrid region, where the head
 Of Ceres bends beneath her golden load ;
 If from a burning brand a scatter'd spark
 Invade the parching ground ; a sudden blaze
 Sweeps o'er the crackling champain : through his
 host 80

Not with less swiftnefs to the furthest ranks
 The words of great Leonidas diffus'd
 A more than mortal fervour. Ev'ry heart
 Distends with thoughts of glory, such, as raise
 The patriot's virtue, and the soldier's fire ; 85
 When danger most tremendous in his form
 Seems in their sight most lovely. On their minds
 Imagination pictures all the scenes
 Of war, the purple field, the heaps of death,
 The glitt'ring trophy, pil'd with Persian arms. 90

BUT lo! the Grecian leaders, who before
 Were station'd near Thermopylæ, salute
 Laconia's king. The Thespian chief, ally'd
 To Dithyrambus, first the silence breaks,
 An ancient warrior. From behind his casque, 95
 Whose crested weight his aged temples bore,
 The slender hairs, all-silver'd o'er by time,
 Flow'd venerable down. He thus began.

JOY now shall crown the period of my days ;
 And whether nigh my father's urn I sleep ; 100
 Or, slain by Persia's sword, embrace the earth,
 Our common parent ; be it, as the gods
 Shall best determine. For the present hour
 I bless their bounty, which hath giv'n my age
 'To see the brave Leonidas, and bid 105
 That hero welcome on this glorious shore
 To fix the basis of the Grecian weal.

HERE too the crafty Anaxander spake.
 Of all the Thebans we, rejoicing, hail
 The king of Sparta. We obey'd his call. 110
 O may oblivion o'er the shame of Thebes
 A dark'ning veil extend ! or those alone
 By 'fame be curs'd, whose impious counsels turn
 Their countrymen from virtue ! Thebes was sunk,
 Her glory bury'd in dishonest sloth. 115
 To wake her languor gen'rous Alpheus came,
 The messenger of freedom. O accept
 Our grateful hearts, thou, Alpheus, art the cause,
 That Anaxander from his native gates
 Not single joins this host, nor tamely these, 120
 My chosen friends, behind their walls remain.

Enough

Enough of words. Time presses. Mount, ye chiefs,
 This lofeliest part of *Æta*. This o'erlooks
 The streights, and far beyond their northern mouth
 Extends our sight across the Malian plain. 125
 Behold a native, Epialtes call'd,
 Who with the foe from Thracia's bounds hath march'd.

DISGUISED in seeming worth, he ended here.
 The camp not long had Epialtes reach'd,
 By race a Malian. Eloquent his tongue, 130
 His heart was false and abject. He was skill'd
 To grace perfidious counsels, and to clothe
 In swelling phrase the baseness of his soul,
 Foul nurse of treasons. To the tents of Greece,
 Himself a Greek, a faithless spy he came. 135
 Soon to the friends of Xerxes he repair'd,
 The Theban chiefs, and nightly counsels held
 How to betray the Spartans, or deject
 By consternation. Up the arduous slope
 With him each leader to the summit climbs. 140
 Thence a tremendous prospect they command,
 Where endless plains, by white pavilions hid,
 Spread like the vast Atlantic, when no shore,
 No rock, no promontory stops the sight
 Unbounded, as it wanders; while the moon, 145
 Resplendent eye of night, in fullest orb
 Surveys th' interminate expanse, and throws
 Her rays abroad to deck in snowy light
 The dancing billows. Such was Xerxes' camp;
 A pow'r unrivall'd by the mightiest king, 150
 Or fiercest conqu'ror, whose blood-thirsty pride,
 Dissolving all the sacred ties, which bind

The happiness of nations, hath upcall'd
 The sleeping fury, Discord, from her den.
 Not from the hundred brazen gates of Thebes, 155
 The tow'rs of Memphis, and those pregnant fields,
 Enrich'd by kindly Nile, such armies swarm'd
 Around Sesostris ; who with trophies fill'd
 The vanquish'd east, who o'er the rapid foam
 Of distant Tanais, o'er the surface broad 160
 Of Ganges sent his formidable name.
 Nor yet in Asia's far extended bounds
 E'er met such numbers, not when Ninus led
 Th' Assyrian race to conquest. Not the gates
 Of Babylon along Euphrates pour'd 165
 Such myriads arm'd ; when, emptying all her streets,
 The rage of dire Semiramis they bore
 Beyond the Indus ; there defeated, left
 His blood-stain'd current turbid with their dead.

YET of the chiefs, contemplating this scene, 170
 Not one is shaken. Undismay'd they stand ;
 Th' immeasurable camp with fearless eyes
 They traverse : while in meditation near
 The treach'rous Malian waits, collecting all
 His pomp of words to paint the hostile pow'r ; 175
 Nor yet with falsehood arms his fraudulent tongue
 To feign a tale of terror. Truth herself
 Beyond the reach of fiction to enhance
 Now aids his treason, and with cold dismay
 Might pierce the boldest heart, unless secur'd 180
 By dauntless virtue, which disdains to live,
 From liberty divorc'd. Requested soon,
 He breaks his artful silence. Greeks and friends,
 Can

Book III. L E O N I D A S. 51

Can I behold my native Malian fields,
 Presenting hostile millions to your fight, 185
 And not in grief suppress the horrid tale,
 Which you exact from these ill-omen'd lips ?
 On Thracia's sea-beat verge I watch'd the foes ;
 Where, joining Europe to the Asian strand,
 A mighty bridge restrain'd th' outrageous waves, 190
 And stemm'd th' impetuous current : while in arms
 'The universal progeny of men
 Seem'd trampling o'er the subjugated flood
 By thousands, by ten thousands. Persians, Medes,
 Assyrians, Saces, Indians, swarthy files 195
 From Æthiopia, Ægypt's tawny sons,
 Arabians, Bactrians, Parthians, all the strength
 Of Asia, and of Libya. Neptune groan'd
 Beneath their number, and indignant heav'd
 His neck against th' incumbent weight. In vain 200
 The violence of Eurus and the North,
 With rage combin'd, against th' unyielding pile
 Dash'd half the Hellespont. The eastern world
 Sev'n days and nights uninterrupted pass
 To cover Thracia's regions. They accept 205
 A Persian lord. They range their hardy race
 Beneath his standards. Macedonia's youth,
 The brave Thessalian horse with ev'ry Greek,
 Who dwells beyond Thermopylæ, attend,
 Assist a foreign tyrant. Sire of gods, 210
 Who in a moment by thy will supreme
 Canst quell the mighty in their proudest hopes,
 Canst raise the weak to safety, O ! impart
 Thy instant succour ! Interpose thy arm !

With lightning blast their standards! O! confound 215
 With triple-bolted thunder Asia's tents,
 Whence rushing millions by the morn will pour
 An inundation to o'erwhelm the Greeks.
 Resistance else were vain against a host,
 Which overspreads Thessalia. Far beyond 220
 That Malian champain, stretching wide below,
 Beyond the utmost measure of the sight
 From this aspiring cliff, the hostile camp
 Contains yet mightier numbers; who have drain'd
 The beds of copious rivers with their thirst, 225
 Who with their arrows hide the mid-day sun.

THEN we shall give them battle in the shade,
 Dieneses reply'd. Not calmly thus
 Diomedon. On Persia's camp he bent
 His low'ring brow, which frowns had furrow'd o'er, 230
 Then fierce exclaim'd. Bellona, turn and view
 With joyful eyes that field, the fatal stage,
 By regal madness for thy rage prepar'd
 To exercise its horrors. Whet thy teeth,
 Voracious death. All Asia is thy prey. 235
 Contagion, famine, and the Grecian sword
 For thy insatiate hunger will provide
 Variety of carnage. He concludes;
 While on the host immense his cloudy brow
 Is fix'd disdainful, and their strength defies. 240

MEAN time an eastern herald down the pass
 Was seen, slow-moving tow'rd the Phocian wall.
 From Asia's monarch delegated, came
 Tigranes and Phraortes. From the hill
 Leonidas conducts th' impatient chiefs. 245
 By

By them environ'd, in his tent he sits;
Where thus Tigranes their attention calls.

AMBASSADORS from Persia's king we stand
Before you, Grecians. To display the pow'r
Of our great master were a needless task. 250
The name of Xerxes, Asia's mighty lord,
Invincible, exalted on a throne,
Surpassing human lustre, must have reach'd
'To ev'ry clime, and ev'ry heart impress'd
With awe, and low submission. Yet I swear
By yon refulgent orb, which flames above,
The glorious symbol of eternal pow'r,
'This military throng, this shew of war
Well nigh persuade me you have never heard
That name, at whose commanding sound the banks 260
Of Indus tremble, and the Caspian wave,
Th' Egyptian flood, the Hellespontic surge
Obedient roll. O impotent and rash!
Whom yet the large beneficence of heav'n,
And heav'nly Xerxes, merciful and kind, 265
Deign to preserve. Resign your arms. Disperse
All to your cities. There let humblest hands,
With earth and water greet your destin'd lord.

As through th' extensive grove, whose leafy boughs
Entwining, crown some eminence with shade, 270
The tempests rush sonorous, and between
'The crashing branches roar; by fierce disdain,
By indignation thus the Grecians rous'd,
In loudest clamour close the Persian's speech:
But ev'ry tongue was hush'd, when Sparta's king 275
This brief reply deliver'd from his seat,

O PERSIAN, when to Xerxes thou return'st,
 Say, thou hast told the wonders of his pow'r.
 Then say, thou saw'st a slender band of Greece,
 Which dares his boasted millions to the field. 280

HE adds no more. Th' ambassadors retire.
 Them o'er the limits of the Grecian lines
 Diomedon and Thespia's youth conduct,
 In slow solemnity they all proceed,
 And sullen silence ; but their looks denote 285
 Far more, than speech could utter. Wrath contracts
 The forehead of Diomedon. His teeth
 Gnash with impatience of delay'd revenge.
 Disdain, which sprung from conscious merit, flush'd
 The cheek of Dithyrambus. On the face 290
 Of either Persian arrogance, incens'd
 By disappointment, lour'd. The utmost streight
 They now attain'd, which open'd on the tents
 Of Asia, there discov'ring wide to view
 Her deep, immense arrangement. Then the heart 295
 Of vain Tigranes, swelling at the sight,
 Thus overflows in loud and haughty phrase.

O ARIMANIUS, origin of ill,
 Have we demanded of thy ruthless pow'r
 Thus with the curse of madness to afflict 300
 These wretched men ? But since thy dreadful ire
 To irresistible perdition dooms
 The Grecian race, we vainly should oppose.
 Be thy dire will accomplish'd. Let them fall,
 Their native soil be fatten'd with their blood. 305

ENRAG'D, the stern Diomedon replies,
 Thou base dependant on a lawless king,

Thou

Thou purple slave, thou boaster, dost thou know,
 That I beheld the Marathonian field ?
 Where like the Libyan sands before the wind 310
 Your host was scatter'd by Athenian spears ;
 Where thou perhaps by ignominious flight
 Didst from this arm protect thy shiv'ring limbs.
O let me find thee in to-morrow's fight !
 Along this rocky pavement shalt thou lie 315
 To dogs a banquet. With uplifted palms
 Tigranes then. Omnipotent, support
 Of scepter'd Xerxes, Horomazes, hear !
 To thee his first victorious fruits of war
 Thy worshipper devotes, the gory spoils, 320
 Which from this Grecian by the rising dawn
 In fight of either host my strength shall rend.

At length Phraortes, interposing, spake.
 I too would find among the Grecian chiefs
 One, who in battle dares abide my lance. 325

THE gallant youth of Thespia swift reply'd.
 Thou look'st on me, O Persian. Worthier far
 Thou might have singled from the ranks of Greece,
 Not one more willing to essay thy force.
 Yes, I will prove before the eye of Mars, ' 330
 How far the prowess of her meanest chief
 Beyond thy vaunts deserves the palm of fame.

THIS said, the Persians to their king repair,
 Back to their camp the Grecians. There they find
 Each foldier, poising his extended spear, 335
 His weighty buckler bracing on his arm
 In warlike preparation. Through the files

Each leader, moving vigilant, by praise,
 By exhortation aids their native warmth.
 Alone the Theban Anaxander pin'd, 340
 Who thus apart his Malian friend bespake.

WHAT has thy lofty eloquence avail'd,
 Alas ! in vain attempting to confound
 The Spartan valour ? With redoubled fires,
 See, how their bosoms glow. They wish to die ; 345
 They wait impatient for th' unequal fight.
 Too soon th' insuperable foes will spread
 Promiscuous havock round, and Thebans share
 The doom of Spartans. Through the guarded pass
 Who will adventure Asia's camp to reach 350
 In our behalf ? That Xerxes may be warn'd
 To spare his friends amid the gen'ral wreck ;
 When his high-swoln resentment like a flood,
 Increas'd by stormy show'rs, shall cover Greece
 With desolation. Epialtes here. 355

WHENCE, Anaxander, this unjust despair ?
 Is there a path on Œta's hills unknown
 To Epialtes ? Over trackless rocks,
 Through mazy woods my secret steps can pass.
 Farewel. I go. Thy merit shall be told 360
 To Persia's king. Thou only watch the hour
 When wanted most, thy ready succour lend.

MEAN time a wary, comprehensive care
 To ev'ry part Leonidas extends ;
 As in the human frame through ev'ry vein, 365
 And artery minute, the ruling heart .
 Its vital pow'rs disperses. In his tent

The prudent chief of Locris he consults ;
 He summons Melibæus by the voice
 Of Agis. In humility not mean, 370
 By no unseemly ignorance depress'd,
 Th' ingenuous swain, by all th' illustrious house
 Of Ajax honour'd, bows before the king,
 Who gracious spake. The confidence bestow'd,
 The praise by sage Oïleus might suffice 375
 To verify thy worth. Myself have watch'd,
 Have found thee skilful, active and discreet.
 Thou know'st the region round. With Agis go,
 The upper freights, the Phocian camp explore.

O CONDESCENSION, Melibæus then, 380
 More ornamental to the great, than gems,
 A purple robe, or diadem ! The king
 Accepts my service. Pleasing is my task.
 Spare not thy servant. Exercise my zeal.
 Oïleus will rejoice, and, smiling, say, 385
 An humble hand may smooth a hero's path.

HE leads the way, while Agis, following, spake.
 O swain, distinguish'd by a lib'ral mind,
 Who were thy parents ? Where thy place of birth ?
 What chance depriv'd thee of a father's house ? 390
 Oïleus sure thy liberty would grant,
 Or Sparta's king solicit for that grace ;
 When in a station equal to thy worth
 Thou may'st be rank'd. The prudent hind began.

IN diff'rent stations diff'rent virtues dwell, 395
 All reaping diff'rent benefits. The great
 In dignity and honours meet reward

For acts of bounty, and heroic toils.
 A servant's merit is obedience, truth,
 Fidelity ; his recompence content. 400
 Be not offended at my words, O chief.
 They, who are free, with envy may behold
 This bondman of Oileus. To his trust,
 His love exalted, I by nature's pow'r - -
 From his pure model could not fail to mold 405
 What, thou entitlest lib'ral. Whence I came,
 Or who my parents, is to me unknown.
 In childhood seiz'd by robbers, I was sold.
 They took their price. They hush'd th' atrocious
 deed.
 Dear to Oileus and his race I throve ; 410
 And whether noble or ignoble born,
 I am contented, studious of their love
 Alone. Ye sons of Sparta, I admire
 Your acts, your spirit, but confine my own
 To their condition, happy in my lord, 415
 Himself of men most happy. Agis bland
 Rejoins. O born with talents to become
 A lot more noble, which, by thee refus'd,
 Thou dost the more deserve ! Laconia's king
 Discerns thy merit through its modest veil. 420
 Consummate prudence in thy words I hear.
 Long may contentment, justly priz'd, be thine.
 But should the state demand thee, I foresee,
 Thou wouldst like others in the field excel,
 Wouldst share in glory. Blithe return'd the swain. 425

NOT ev'ry service is confin'd to arms.
 Thou shalt behold me in my present state

Not

Book III. L E O N I D A S. 59

Not useless. If the charge, Oïleus gave,
I can accomplish, meriting his praise,
And thy esteem, my glory will be full. 430

BOTH pleas'd, in converse thus pursue their way,
Where Æta lifts her summits huge to heav'n
In rocks abrupt, pyramidal, or tower'd
Like castles. Sudden from a tufted crag,
Where goats are browsing, Melibœus hears 435
A call of welcome. There his course he stays.



E N D O F T H E T H I R D B O O K .

L E O -

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Tigranes and Phraortes repair to Xerxes, whom they find seated on a throne, surrounded by his Satraps, in a magnificent pavilion; while the Magi stand before him, and sing a hymn, containing the religion of Zoroastres. Xerxes, notwithstanding the arguments of his brothers, Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, gives no credit to the ambassadors, who report, that the Grecians are determined to maintain the pass against him; but by the advice of Artemisia, the queen of Caria, ascends his chariot to take a view of the Grecians himself, and commands Demaratus, an exiled king of Sparta, to attend him. He passes through the midst of his army, consisting of many nations, differing in arms, customs and manners. He advances to the entrance of the streights, and, surprized at the behaviour of the Spartans, demands the reason of it from Demaratus; which occasions a conversation between them, on the mercenary forces of Persia, and the militia of Greece. Demaratus, weeping at the sight of his countrymen, is comforted by Hyperanthes. Xerxes, still incredulous, commands Tigranes and Phraortes to bring the Grecians bound before him the next day, and retires to his pavilion. Artemisia remains behind with her son, and communicates

to

to Hyperanthes her apprehensions of a defeat at Thermopylæ. She takes an accurate view of the pass, chuses a convenient place for an ambuscade, and on her departure to the Persian camp, is surprized by a reproof from a woman of an awful appearance on a cliff of Mount Oeta.

THE plain beyond Thermopylæ is girt
Half round by mountains, half by Neptune
lav'd.

The arduous ridge is broken deep in clefts,
Which open channels to pellucid streams
In rapid flow sonorous. Chief in fame 5
Spercheos, boasting once his poplars tall,
Foams down a stony bed. Throughout the face
Of this broad champain numberless are pitch'd
Barbarian tents. Along the winding flood
To rich Thessalia's confines they extend. 10
'They fill the vallies, late profusely blest'd
In nature's vary'd beauties. Hostile spears
Now bristle horrid through her languid shrubs.
Pale die her flow'rets under barb'rous feet.
Embracing ivy from its rock is torn. 15
The lawn, dismantled of its verdure, fades. .
The poplar groves, uprooted from the banks,
Leave desolate the stream. Elab'rate domes,
To heav'n devoted in recesses green,
Had felt rude force, insensible and blind 20
To elegance and art. The statues, busts,
The figur'd vases, mutilated, lie
With chisell'd columns, their engraven freeze,
Their architrave and cornice, all disjoin'd.

YET unpolluted, is a part reserv'd 25
 In this deep vale, a patrimonial spot
 Of Aleuadian Princes, who, allies
 To Xerxes, reign'd in Thessaly. There grow
 Inviolatè the shrubs. There branch the trees,
 Sons of the forest. Over downy moss 30
 Smooth walks and fragrant, lucid here and broad,
 There clos'd in myrtle under woodbine roofs,
 Wind to retreats delectable, to grots,
 To sylvan-structures, bow'rs, and cooling dells,
 Enliven'd all and musical with birds 35
 Of vocal sweetness, in relucènt plumes
 Innumerably various. Lulling falls
 Of liquid chrystal from perennial founts
 Attune their pebbled channels. Here the queen
 The noble dames of Persia, here the train 40
 Of royal infants, each with eunuch guards,
 In rich pavilions, dazzling to the sight,
 Possess'd, remote from onset and surprise,
 A tranquil station. Ariana here,
 Ill-destin'd princess, from Darius sprung, 45
 Hangs, undelighted, o'er melodious rills
 Her drooping forehead. Love-afflictèd fair !
 All inharmonious are the feather'd choirs
 To her sad ear. From flow'rs, and florid plants
 To her the breezes, wafting fresh perfumes, 50
 Transmit no pleasure. Sedulous in vain,
 Her tender slaves in harmony with lutes
 Of soothing sound their warbled voices blend
 To charm her sadness. This, the precious part
 Of Asia's camp, Artuchus holds in charge, 55
A Sa-

Book IV. L E O N I D A S. 63

A Satrap, long experienc'd, who presides
 O'er all the regal palaces. High rank'd,
 Bold, resolute and faithful, he commands
 The whole Sperchean vale. In prospect rise
 The distant navy, dancing on the foam, 60
 Th' unbounded camp, enveloping the plain,
 With Xerxes' tent, august in structure plac'd
 A central object to attract the eyes
 Of subject millions. Thither now resort
 Tigranes and Phraortes. Him they find 65
 Inclos'd by princes, by illustrious chiefs,
 The potentates of Asia. Near his side
 Abrocomes and Hyperanthes wait,
 His gallant brothers, with Mazæus brave.
 Pandates, Intaphernes, mighty lords. 70
 Their scepter'd master from his radiant seat
 Looks down imperious. So the stately tow'r
 Of Belus, mingling its majestic brow
 With heav'n's bright azure, from on high survey'd
 The huge extent of Babylon with all 75
 Her sumptuous domes and palaces beneath.
 This day his banners to unfurl in Greece
 The monarch's will decides ; but first ordains,
 That grateful hymns should celebrate the name
 Of Horomazes : So the Persians call'd 80
 The world's great author. Rob'd in purest white
 The Magi rang'd before th' unfolded tent.
 Fire blaz'd beside them. Tow'rd the sacred flame
 They turn'd, and sent their tuneful praise to heav'n.

FROM Zoroastres was the song deriv'd, 85
 Who on the hills of Persia from his cave,

By flow'rs environ'd, and melodious founts,
 Which sooth'd the solemn mansion, had reveal'd,
 How Horomazes, radiant source of good,
 Original, immortal, fram'd the globe 90
 In fruitfulness and beauty : how with stars
 By him the heav'ns were spangled : how the sun,
 Refulgent Mithra, purest spring of light,
 And genial warmth, whence teeming nature smiles,
 Burst from the east at his creating voice ; 95
 When straight beyond the golden verge of day
 Night shew'd the horrors of her distant reign,
 Where black and hateful Arimanius frown'd,
 The author foul of evil : how with shades
 From his dire mansion he deform'd the works 100
 Of Horomazes, turn'd to noxious heat
 The solar beam, that foodful earth might parch,
 That streams, exhaling, might forsake their beds,
 Whence pestilence and famine : how the pow'r
 Of Horomazes in the human breast 105
 Benevolence and equity infus'd,
 Truth, temperance, and wisdom sprung from heav'n :
 When Arimanius blacken'd all the soul
 With falsehood and injustice, with desires
 Insatiable, with violence and rage, 110
 Malignity and folly. If the hand
 Of Horomazes on precarious life
 Sheds wealth and pleasure ; swift th' infernal god
 With wild excess, or av'rice blasts the joy.
 Thou, Horomazes, victory dost give. 115
 By thee with fame the regal head is crown'd.
 Great Xerxes owns thy succour. When in storms
 The

The hate of direful Arimanius swell'd
 The Hellespont ; thou o'er its chafing breast
 The destin'd master of the world didst lead, 120
 This day his promis'd glories to enjoy :
 When Greece affrighted to his arm shall bend ;
 Ev'n as at last shall Arimanius fall
 Before thy might, and evil be no more.

THE Magi ceas'd their harmony. Behold, 125
 From her tall ship between a double row
 Of naval warriors, while a golden ray
 Shoots from her standard, Artemisia lands.
 In her enrich'd accoutrements of war, 129
 The full-wrought buckler, and high-crested helm,
 In Caria first devis'd, across the beach
 Her tow'ring form advances. So the pine,
 From Taurus hewn mature in spiry pride,
 Now by the sailer in its canvass wings
 Voluminous, and dazzling pendants dress'd, 135
 On Artemisia's own imperial deck
 Is seen to rise, and overtop the grove
 Of crouded masts surrounding. In her heart
 Deep scorn of courtly counsellors she bore,
 Who fill with impious vanity their king ; 140
 As when he lash'd the Hellespont with rods,
 Amid the billows cast a golden chain
 To fetter Neptune. Yet her brow severe
 Unbent its rigour often, as she glanc'd
 On her young son, who, pacing near in arms 145
 Of Carian guise, proportion'd to his years,
 Look'd up, and waken'd by repeated smiles
 Maternal fondness, melting in that eye,

Which scowl'd on purpled flatterers. Her seat
 At the right hand of Xerxes she assumes, 150
 Invited ; while in adoration bow'd
 Tigranes and Phraortes. Prone they lay,
 Across their foreheads spread their servile palms,
 As from a present deity, too bright
 For mortal vision, to conceal their eyes. 155
 At length in abject phrase Tigranes thus.

O XERXES, live for ever ! Gracious lord,
 Who dost permit thy servants to approach
 Thy awful sight, and prostrate to confess
 Thy majesty and radiance. May the pow'r 160
 Of Hormazes stretch thy regal arm
 O'er endless nations from the Indian shores
 To those wide floods, which beat Iberian strands,
 From northern Tanais to the source of Nile !
 Still from thy head may Arimanius bend 165
 Against thy foes his malice ! Yonder Greeks,
 Already smote with frenzy by his wrath,
 Reject thy proffer'd clemency. They chuse
 To magnify thy glory by their fall.

THE monarch, turning to his brothers, spake. 170
 Say, Hyperanthes, can thy soul believe
 These tidings ? Sure these slaves have never dar'd
 To face the Grecians, but delude our ears
 With base impostures, which their fear suggests.

HE frown'd, and Hyperanthes calm reply'd. 175
 O from his servants may the king avert
 His indignation ! Greece was fam'd of old
 For martial spirit, and a dauntless breed.
 I once have try'd their valour. To my words

Abrocomes

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Abrocomes can witness. When thy fire 180
 And ours, Darius, to Athenian shores
 With Artaphernes brave and Datis sent
 Our tender youth ; at Marathon we found,
 How weak the hope, that numbers could dismay
 A foe, resolv'd on victory, or death. 185
 Yet not, as one contemptible, or base,
 Let me appear before thee. Though the Greeks
 With such persisting courage be endu'd,
 Soon as the king shall summon to the field,
 He shall behold me in the dang'rous van 190
 Exalt my spear, and pierce the hostile ranks,
 Or sink beneath them. Xerxes swift rejoin'd.
 WHY over Asia, and the Libyan soil
 With all their nations doth my potent arm
 Extend its scepter ? Wherefore do I sweep 195
 Across the earth with millions in my train ?
 Why shade the ocean with unnumber'd sails ?
 Why all this pow'r, unless th' Almighty's will
 Deceed one master to the subject world ;
 And that the earth's extremity alone 200
 Should bound my empire ? He for this reduc'd
 The Nile's revolted sons, enlarg'd my sway
 With sandy Libya, and the sultry clime
 Of Æthiopia. He for this subdu'd
 The Hellepontic foam, and taught the sea 205
 Obedience to my nod. Then dream no more,
 That heav'n, deserting my imperial cause,
 With courage more, than human, will inspire
 Yon despicable Grecians, and expunge
 The common fears of nature from their breasts. 210

THE monarch ceas'd. Abrocomes began.
 The king commands us to reveal our thoughts,
 Incredulous he hears. But time and truth
 Not Horomazes can arrest. Thy beams 214
 To instant light'ning, Mithra, maystst thou change
 For my destruction ; may th' offended king
 Frown on his servant, cast a loathing eye ;
 If the assertion of my lips be false :
 Our further march those Grecians will oppose.

AMID th' encircling peers Argestes sat, 220
 A potent prince. O'er Sipylus he reign'd,
 Whose verdant summits overlook'd the waves
 Of Hermus and Pactolus. Either stream,
 Enrich'd by golden sands, a tribute paid
 To this great Satrap. Through the servile court 225
 Yet none was found more practis'd in the arts
 Of mean submission ; none more skill'd to gain
 The royal favour ; none, who better knew
 The phrase, the look, the gesture of a slave ;
 None more detesting Artemisia's worth, 230
 By her none more despis'd. His master's eye
 He caught, then spake. Display thy dazzling state,
 Thou deity of Asia. Greece will hide
 Before thy presence her dejected face.

LAST Artemisia, rising stern, began. 235
 Why sits the lord of Asia in his tent,
 Unprofitably wasting precious hours
 In vain discussion, whether yonder Greeks,
 Rang'd in defence of that important pass,
 Will fight, or fly ? A question by the sword 240
 To be decided. Still to narrow streights

By

By land, by sea thy council hath confin'd
 Each enterprife of war. In numbers weak
 Twice have th' Athenians in Eubœa's frith
 Repuls'd thy navy——But whate'er thy will, 245
 Be it enforc'd by vigour. Let the king
 The diff'rence see by trial in the field
 Between smooth sound and valour. Then dissolve
 These impotent debates. Ascend thy car.
 The future stage of war thyself explore. 250
 Behind thee leave the vanity of hope,
 That such a foe to splendour will submit,
 Whom steel, not gold, must vanquish. Thou provide
 Thy mail, Argestes. Not in filken robes,
 Not as in council with an oily tongue, 255
 But spear to spear, and clanging shield to shield,
 Thou soon must grapple on a field of blood.

THE king arose——No more. Prepare my car.
 The Spartan exile, Demaratus, call.
 We will ourselves advance to view the foe. 260

THE monarch will'd; and suddenly he heard
 His trampling horses. High on silver wheels
 The iv'ry car with azure sapphires shone,
 Cærulean beryls, and the jasper green,
 The emerald, the ruby's glowing blush, 265
 The flaming topaz with its golden beam,
 The pearl, th' empurpled amethyst, and all
 The various gems, which India's mines afford
 To deck the pomp of kings. In burnish'd gold
 A sculptur'd eagle from behind display'd 270
 His stately neck, and o'er the royal head
 Outstretch'd his dazzling wings. Eight gen'rous steeds,
 Which

Which on the fam'd Nisæan plain were nurs'd
 In wintry Media, drew the radiant car.
 Not those of old, to Hercules refus'd 275
 By false Laomedon, nor they, which bore
 The son of Thetis through the scatter'd rear
 Of Troy's devoted race, with these might vye
 In strength, or beauty. In obedient pride
 They hear their lord. Exulting, in the air 280
 They toss their foreheads. On their glist'ning chests
 The silver manes disport. The king ascends.
 Beside his footstool Demaratus sits.
 The charioteer now shakes th' effulgent reins,
 Strong Patirampbes. At the signal bound 285
 Th' attentive steeds ; the chariot flies : behind,
 Ten thousand horse in thunder sweep the field.
 Down to the sea-beat margin, on a plain
 Of vast expansion in battalia wait
 The eastern bands. To these th' imperial wheels, 290
 By princes follow'd in a hundred cars,
 Proceed. The queen of Caria and her son
 With Hyperanthes rode. The king's approach
 Swift through the wide arrangement is proclaim'd.
 He now draws nigh. Th' innumerable host 295
 Roll back by nations, and admit their lord
 With all his Satraps. As from crystal domes,
 Built underneath an arch of pendent seas,
 When that stern pow'r, whose trident rules the floods,
 With 'each cærulean deity ascends, 300
 Thron'd in his pearly chariot, all the deep
 Divides its bosom to th' emerging god ;
 So Xerxes rode between the Asian world,

On either side receding : when, as down
 Th' immeasurable ranks his fight was lost, 305
 A momentary gloom o'ercast his mind,
 While this reflection fill'd his eyes with tears;
 That, soon as time a hundred years had told,
 Not one among those millions should survive.
 Whence to obscure thy pride arose that cloud ? 310
 Was it, that once humanity could touch
 A tyrant's breast ? Or rather did thy soul
 Repine, O Xerxes, at the bitter thought,
 That all thy pow'r was mortal ? But the veil
 Of sadness soon forsook his bright'ning eye, 315
 As with adoring awe those millions bow'd,
 And to his heart relentless pride recal'd.
 Elate the mingled prospect he surveys
 Of glitt'ring files unnumber'd, chariots scyth'd,
 On thund'ring axles roll'd, and haughty steeds, 320
 In sumptuous trappings clad, Barbaric pomp.
 While gorgeous banners to the sun expand
 Their streaming volumes of relucant gold,
 Preeminent amidst tiaras gemm'd
 Engraven helmets, shields emboss'd, and spears 325
 In number equal to the bladed grass,
 Whose living green in vernal beauty clothes
 Thessalia's vale. What pow'rs of sounding verse
 Can to the mind present th' amazing scene ?
 Not thee, whom rumour's fab'ling voice delights, 330
 Poetic fancy, to my aid I call;
 But thou, historic truth, support my song,
 Which shall the various multitude display,
 Their arms, their manners, and their native seats.

THE Persians first in scaly corselets shone, 335
 A gen'rous nation, worthy to enjoy
 The liberty their injur'd fathers lost,
 Whose arms for Cyrus overturn'd the strength
 Of Babylon and Sardis. Pow'r advanc'd
 The victor's head above his country's laws. 340
 Their tongues were practis'd in the words of truth,
 Their limbs inur'd to ev'ry manly toil,
 To brace the bow, to rule th' impetuous steed,
 To dart the javelin; but untaught to form
 The ranks of war, with unconnected force, 345
 With ineffectual fortitude they rush'd,
 As on a fence of adamant, to pierce
 Th' indissoluble phalanx. Lances short,
 And osier-woven targets they oppos'd
 To weighty Grecian spears, and massy shields. 350
 On ev'ry head tiaras rose like tow'rs,
 Impenetrable. With a golden gloss
 Blaz'd their gay sandals, and the floating reins
 Of each proud courser. Daggers on their thighs,
 Well-furnished quivers on their shoulders hung, 355
 And strongest bows of mighty size they bore.
 Resembling these in arms, the Medes are seen,
 The Cissians and Hyrcanians. Media once
 From her bleak mountains aw'd the subject east.
 Her kings in cold Ecbatana were thron'd. 360
 The Cissians march'd from Susa's regal walls,
 From sultry fields, o'erspread with branching palms,
 And white with lillies, water'd by the floods
 Of fam'd Choaspes. His transparent wave
 The costly goblet wafts to Persia's kings. 365
 All

All other streams the royal lip disdains.
 Hyrcania's race forfook their fruitful clime,
 Dark in the shadows of expanding oaks,
 To Ceres dear and Bacchus. There the corn,
 Bent by its foodful burden sheds, unreap'd, 370

Its plenteous seed, impregnating the soil
 With future harvests ; while in ev'ry wood
 Their precious labours on the loaded boughs
 The honey'd swarms pursue. Assyria's sons
 Display their brazen casques, unskilful work 375

Of rude Barbarians. Each sustains a mace,
 O'erlaid with iron. Near Euphrates' banks
 Within the mighty Babylonian gates
 They dwell, and where still mightier once in sway
 Old Ninus rear'd its head, th' imperial seat 380

Of eldest tyrants. These Chaldæa joins,
 The land of shepherds. From the pastures wide
 There Belus first discern'd the various course
 Of heav'n's bright planets, and the clustring stars
 With names distinguish'd ; whence himself was
 deem'd 385

The first of gods. His sky-ascending fane
 In Babylon the proud Assyrians rais'd.
 Drawn from the bounteous soil, by Ochus lav'd,
 The Bactrians stood, and rough in skins of goats
 The Paricanian archers. Caspian ranks 390

From barren mountains, from the joyless coast
 Around the stormy lake, whose name they bore,
 Their scymetars upheld, and cany bows.
 The Indian tribes, a threefold host compose.

Part guide the courser, part the rapid car ; 395

The rest on foot within the bending cane
 For slaughter fix the iron-pointed reed.
 They o'er the Indus from the distant verge
 Of Ganges passing, left a region, lov'd
 By lavish nature. There the season bland 400
 Bestows a double harvest. Honey'd shrubs,
 The cinnamon, the spikenard bless their fields.
 Array'd in native wealth, each warrior shines.
 His ears bright-beaming pendants grace; his hands,
 Encircled, wear a bracelet, starr'd with gems. 405
 Such were the nations, who to Xerxes sent
 Their mingled aids of infantry and horse.

Now, Muse, recite, what multitudes obscur'd
 The plain on foot, or elevated high
 On martial axles, or on camels beat 410
 The loosen'd mold. The Parthians first appear,
 Then weak in numbers, from unfruitful hills,
 From woods, nor yet for warlike steeds renown'd.
 Near them the Sogdians, Dadices arrange,
 Gandarians and Chorasmians. Sacian throngs 415
 From cold Imaus pour'd, from Oxus' wave,
 From Cyra, built on Iaxartes' brink,
 A bound of Persia's empire. Wild, untam'd,
 To fury prone, their deserts they forsook.
 A bow, a falchion, and a pond'rous axe 420
 The savage legions arm'd. A pointed casque
 O'er each grim visage rear'd an iron cone.
 In arms like Persians the Saranges stood.
 High, as their knees, the shapely buskins clung
 Around their legs. Magnificent they trod 425
 In garments richly tinctur'd. Next are seen
 The

The Pæstian, Mycian, and the Utian train,
 In skin of goats rude-vested. But in spoils
 Of tawny lions, and of spotted pards
 The graceful range of Æthiopian shews 430
 An equal stature, and a beauteous frame.
 Their torrid region had imbrown'd their cheeks,
 And curl'd their jetty locks. In ancient song
 Renown'd for justice, riches they disdain'd,
 As foes to virtue. From their seat remote 435
 On Nilus' verge above th' Ægyptian bound
 Forc'd by their king's malignity and pride,
 These friends of hospitality and peace,
 Themselves uninjur'd, wage reluctant war
 Against a land, whose climate, and whose name 440
 To them were strange. With hardest stone they point
 The rapid arrow. Bows four cubits long,
 Form'd of elastic branches from the palm,
 They carry, knotted clubs, and lances, arm'd
 With horns of goats. The Paphlagonians march'd 445
 From where Carambis with projected brows
 O'erlooks the dusky Euxine, wrapt in mists,
 From where through flow'rs, which paint his vary'd
 banks,
 Parthenius flows. The Lydian bands succeed ;
 The Matienians, Mariandenians next ; 450
 To them the Syrian multitudes who range
 Among the cedars on the shaded ridge
 Of Libanus ; who cultivate the glebe
 Wide-water'd by Orontes ; who reside
 Near Daphne's grove, or pluck from loaded palms 455
 The foodful date, which clusters on the plains

Of rich Damascus. All, who bear the name
 Of Cappadocians, swell the Syrian host,
 With those, who gather from the fragrant shrub
 The aromatic balsam, and extract 460
 Its milky juice along the lovely side
 Of Jordan, winding, till immers'd he sleeps
 Beneath a pitchy surface, which obscures
 Th' Asphaltic pool. The Phrygians then advance,
 To them their ancient colony are join'd, 465
 Armenia's sons. These see the gushing founts
 Of strong Euphrates cleave the yielding earth,
 Then, wide in lakes expanding, hide the plain;
 Whence with collected waters, fierce and deep,
 His passage rending through diminish'd rocks, 470
 To Babylon he foams. Not so the stream
 Of soft Araxes to the Caspian glides;
 He, stealing imperceptibly, sustains
 The green profusion of Armenia's meads.

Now strange to view, in similar attire, 475
 But far unlike in manners to the Greeks,
 Appear the Lydians. Wantonness and sport
 Were all their care. Beside Cayster's brink,
 Or smooth Mæander, winding silent by,
 Beside Pactolean waves, among the vines 480
 Of Tmolus rising, or the wealthy tide
 Of golden-sanded Hermus they allure
 The sight, enchanted by the graceful dance;
 Or with melodious sweetness charm the air,
 And melt to softest languishment the soul. 485
 What to the field of danger could incite
 These tender sons of luxury? The lash

Of

Of their fell sov'reign drove their shiv'ring backs
Through hail and tempest, which enrag'd the main,
And shook beneath their trembling steps the pile 490
Conjoining Asia and the western world.
To them Mæonia, hot with sulph'rous mines,
Unites her troops. No tree adorns their fields,
Unblest'd by verdure. Ashes hide the soil;
Black are the rocks, and ev'ry hill deform'd 495
By conflagration. Helmets press their brows.
Two darts they brandish. On their woolly vests
A sword is girt; and hairy hides compose
Their bucklers round and small. The Mysians left
Olympus wood-envelop'd, left the meads, 500
Wash'd by Caicus, and the baneful tide
Of Lycus, nurse to serpents. Next advance
An ancient nation, who in early times
By Trojan arms assail'd, their native land
Esteem'd less dear, than freedom, and exchang'd 505
Their seat on Strymon, where in Thrace he pours
A freezing current, for the distant flood
Of fishy Sangar. These, Bithynians nam'd,
Their habitation to the sacred feet
Of Dindymus extend. Yet there they groan 510
Beneath oppression, and their freedom mourn
On Sangar now, as once on Strymon lost.
The ruddy skins of foxes cloth'd their heads.
Their shields were fashion'd like the horned moon.
A vest embrac'd their bodies & while abroad, 515
Ting'd with unnumber'd hues, a mantle flow'd.
But other Thracians, who their former name
Retain'd in Asia, fulgent morions wore,

With horns of bulls in imitating brass,
 Curv'd o'er the crested ridge. Phœnician cloth 520
 Their legs infolded. Wont to chase the wolf,
 A hunter's spear they grasp'd. What nations still
 On either side of Xerxes, while he pass'd,
 Their huge array discov'ring, swell his soul
 With more, than mortal pride? The cluster'd bands 525
 Of Moschians and Macronians now appear,
 The Mosynœcians, who, on berries fed,
 In wooden tow'rs along the Pontic sands
 Repose their painted limbs; the mirthful race
 Of Tibarenians next, whose careless minds 530
 Delight in play and laughter. Then advance
 In garments, buckled on their spacious chests,
 A people, destin'd in eternal verse,
 Ev'n thine, sublime Mæonides, to live.
 These are the Milyans. Solymi their name 535
 In thy celestial strains, Pisidia's hills
 Their dwelling. Once a formidable train
 They fac'd the strong Bellerophon in war.
 Now doom'd a more tremendous foe to meet,
 Themselves unnerv'd by thralldom, they must leave 540
 Their putrid bodies to the dogs of Greece.
 The Marians follow. Next is Aria's host,
 Drawn from a region horrid all in thorn,
 A dreary waste of sands, which mock the toil
 Of patient culture; save one favour'd spot, 545
 Which from the wild emerges like an isle,
 Attir'd in verdure, interspers'd with vines
 Of gen'rous nurture, yielding juice, which scorns
 The injuries of time: yet nature's hand

Had

Book IV. L E O N I D A S. 79

Had sown their rocks with coral ; had enrich'd 550

Their desert hills with veins of sapphirs blue,

Which on the turbant shine. On ev'ry neck

The coral blushes through the num'rous throng.

The Allarodians, and Sasperian bands,

Equipp'd like Colchians, wield a falchion small. 555

Their heads are guarded by a helm of wood,

Their lances short, of hides undress'd their shields.

The Colchians march'd from Phasis, from the Strand,

Where once Medea, fair enchantress flood,

And, wond'ring, view'd the first advent'rous keel, 560

Which cut the Pontic foam. From Argo's side

The demigods descended. They repair'd

To her fell fire's inhospitable hall.

His blooming graces Jason there disclos'd.

With ev'ry art of eloquence divine 565

He claim'd the golden fleece. The virgin heard,

She gaz'd in fatal ravishment, and lov'd.

Then to the hero she resigns her heart.

Her magic tames the brazen-footed bulls.

She lulls the sleepless dragon. O'er the main 570

He wafts the golden prize, and gen'rous fair,

The destin'd victim of his treach'rous vows. •

The hostile Colchians then pursu'd their flight

In vain. By ancient enmity inflam'd,

Or to recal the long-forgotten wrong 575

Compell'd by Xerxes, now they menace Greece

With desolation. Next in Median garb

A croud appear'd, who left the peopled isles

In Persia's gulph, and round Arabia strewn.

Some in their native topaz were adorn'd, 580

From

From Ophiodes, from Topazos sprung ;
 Some in the shells of tortoises, which brood
 Around Casitis' verge. For battle range
 Those, who reside, where, all beset with palms,
 Erythras lies entomb'd, a potent king, 585
 Who nam'd of old the Erythræan main.
 On chariots scyth'd the Libyans sat, array'd
 In skins terrific, brandishing their darts
 Of wood, well-temper'd in the hard'ning flames.
 Not Libya's deserts from tyrannic sway 590
 Could hide her sons ; much less could freedom dwell
 Amid the plenty of Arabia's fields :
 Where spicy Cassia, where the fragrant reed,
 Where myrrh, and hallow'd frankincence perfume
 The Zephyr's wing. A bow of largest size 595
 Th' Arabian carries. O'er his lucid vest
 Loose floats a mantle, on his shoulder clasp'd.
 Two chosen myriads on the lofty backs
 Of camels rode, who match'd the fleetest horse.

SUCH were the numbers, which, from Asia led, 600
 In base prostration, bow'd before the wheels
 Of Xerxes' chariot. Yet what legions more
 The Malian sand o'ershadow ? Forward rolls
 The regal car through nations, who in arms,
 In order'd ranks unlike the orient tribes, 605
 Upheld the spear and buckler. But, untaught
 To bend the servile knee, erect they stood ;
 Unless that, mourning o'er the shameful weight
 Of their new bondage, some their brows depress'd,
 Their arms with grief distaining. Europe's sons 610
 Were these, whom Xerxes by resistless force

Had

Had gather'd round his standards. Murm'ring here,
The sons of Thrace and Macedonia rang'd ;
Here on his steed the brave Theſſalian frown'd ;
There pin'd reluctant multitudes, of Greece 615
Redundant plants, in colonies diſpers'd
Between Byzantium and the Malian bay.

THROUGH all the nations, who ador'd his pride,
Or fear'd his pow'r, the monarch now was paſs'd ;
Nor yet among thoſe millions could be found 620
One, who in beauteous feature might compare,
Or tow'ring ſize with Xerxes. O poſſeſs'd
Of all, but virtue, doom'd to ſhew, how mean,
How weak, without her, is unbounded pow'r,
The charm of beauty, and the blaze of ſtate, 625
How inſecure of happineſs, how vain !
Thou, who could'ſt mourn the common lot, by heav'n
From none withheld, which oft to thouſands proves
Their only refuge from a tyrant's rage ;
Which in conſuming ſickneſs, age, or pain 630
Becomes at laſt a ſoothing hope to all :
Thou, who could'ſt weep, that nature's gentle hand
Should lay her weary'd offspring in the tomb ;
Yet could'ſt remorseleſs from their peaceful ſeats
Lead half the nations, victims to thy pride, 635
To famine, plague and maſſacre a prey ;
What didſt thou merit from the injur'd world ?
What ſuffrings to compenſate for the tears
Of Aſia's mothers, for unpeopled realms,
For all this waſte of nature ? On his hoſt 640
Th' exulting monarch bends his haughty fight,
To Demaratus then directs his voice,

My father, great Darius, to thy mind
 Recal, O Spartan. Gracious he receiv'd
 Thy wand'ring steps, expell'd their native home. 645
 My favour too remember. To beguile
 Thy benefactor, and disfigure truth
 Would ill become thee. With confid'rate eyes
 Look back on these battalions. Now declare,
 If yonder Grecians will oppose their march. 650
 To him the exile. Deem not, mighty lord,
 I will deceive thy goodness by a tale
 To give them glory, who degraded mine.
 Nor be the king offended, while I use
 The voice of truth. The Spartans never fly. 655
 CONTEMPTUOUS smil'd the monarch, and re-
 sum'd.

Wilt thou, in Lacedæmon once supreme,
 Encounter twenty Persians? Yet these Greeks
 In greater disproportion must engage
 Our host to-morrow. Demaratus then. 660
 By single combat were the trial vain
 To shew the pow'r of well-united force,
 Which oft by military skill surmounts
 The weight of numbers. Prince, the difference learn
 Between thy warriors, and the sons of Greece. 665
 The flow'r, the safeguard of thy num'rous camp
 Are mercenaries. These are canton'd round
 Thy provinces. No fertile field demands
 Their painful hand to break the fallow glebe.
 Them to the noon-day toil no harvest-calls, 670
 Nor on the mountain falls the stubborn oak
 By their laborious axe. Their watchful eyes

Observe

Observe not, how the flocks and heifers feed.
 To them of wealth, of all possessions void,
 The name of country with an empty sound 675
 Flies o'er the ear, nor warms their joyless hearts,
 Who share no country. Needy, yet in scorn
 Rejecting labour, wretched by their wants,
 Yet profligate through indolence, with limbs
 Enervated and soft, with minds corrupt, 680
 From misery, debauchery and sloth
 Are these to battle drawn against a foe,
 Train'd in gymnastic exercise and arms,
 Inur'd to hardship, and the child of toil,
 Wont through the freezing show'r, the wintry storm 685
 O'er his own glebe the tardy ox to goad,
 Or in the sun's impetuous heat to glow
 Beneath the burthen of his yellow sheaves ;
 Whence on himself, on her, whose faithful arms
 Infold him joyful, on a growing race 690
 Which glad his dwelling, plenty he bestows
 With independence. When to battle call'd,
 For them his dearest comfort, and his care,
 And for the harvest, promis'd to his toil,
 He lifts the shield, nor shuns unequal force. 695
 Such are the troops of ev'ry state in Greece.
 One only yields a breed more warlike still,
 Of whom selected bands appear in fight,
 All citizens of Sparta. They the glebe
 Have never turn'd, nor bound the golden sheaf. 700
 They are devoted to severer tasks
 For war alone, their sole delight and care.
 From infancy to manhood they are train'd

To winter watches, to inclement skies,
 To plunge through torrents, brave the tusky boar, 705
 To arms and wounds ; a discipline of pain
 So fierce, so constant, that to them a camp
 With all its hardships is a seat of rest,
 And war itself remission from their toil.

THEY words are folly, with redoubled scorn 710
 Returns the monarch. Doth not freedom dwell
 Among the Spartans ? Therefore will they shun
 Superior foes. The unrestrain'd and free
 Will fly from danger ; while my vassals, born
 To absolute controlment from their king 715
 Know, if th' allotted station they desert,
 The scourge awaits them, and my heavy wrath.

To this the exile. O conceive not, prince,
 That Spartans want an object, where to fix
 Their eyes in rev'rence, in obedient dread. 720
 To them more awful, than the name of king
 To Asia's trembling millions, is the law ;
 Whose sacred voice enjoins them to confront
 Unnumber'd foes to vanquish, or to die.

•HERE Demaratus pauses. Xerxes halts. 725
 Its long defile Thermopylæ presents.
 The Satraps leave their cars. On foot they form
 A splendid orb around their lord. By chance
 The Spartans then compos'd th' external guard.
 They, in a martial exercise employ'd, 730
 Heed not the monarch, or his gaudy train ;
 But poise the spear, protended, as in fight ;
 Or lift their adverse shields in single strife ;

Or, trooping, forward rush, retreat and wheel
 In ranks unbroken, and with equal feet : 735
 While others calm beneath their polish'd helms
 Draw down their hair, whose length of sable curls
 O'erspread their necks with terror. Xerxes here
 The exile questions. What do these intend,
 Who with assiduous hands adjust their hair ? 740

To whom the Spartan. O imperial lord,
 Such is their custom, to adorn their heads,
 When full determin'd to encounter death.
 Bring down thy nations in resplendent steel ;
 Arm, if thou canst, the gen'ral race of man, 745
 All, who possess the regions unexplor'd
 Beyond the Ganges, all, whose wand'ring steps
 Above the Caspian range the Scythian wild
 With those, who drink the secret fount of Nile :
 Yet to Laconian bosoms shall dismay 750
 Remain a stranger. Fervour from his lips
 Thus breaks aloud ; when, gushing from his eyes,
 Resistless grief o'erflows his cheeks. Aside
 His head he turns. He weeps in copious streams.
 The keen remembrance of his former state, 755
 His dignity, his greatness, and the sight
 Of those brave ranks, which thus unshaken stood,
 And spread amazement through the world in arms,
 Excite these sorrows. His impassion'd looks
 Review the godlike warriors, who beneath 760
 His standard once victorious fought, who call'd
 Him once their king, their leader ; then again,
 O'ercharg'd with anguish, he bedews with tears

His rev'rend beard, in agony bemoans
 His faded honours, his illustrious name 765
 Forgotten long, his Majesty defil'd
 By exile, by dependence. So obscur'd
 By sordid moss, and ivy's creeping leaf,
 Some princely palace, or stupendous fane
 Magnificent in ruin nods; where time 770
 From under shelving architraves hath mow'd
 The column down, and cleft the pond'rous dome.

Not unobserv'd by Hyperanthes, mourn'd
 Th' unhappy Spartan. Kindly in his own
 He press'd the exile's hand, and thus humane. 775

O DEMARATUS, in this grief I see,
 How just thy praises of Laconia's state.
 Though cherish'd here with universal love,
 Thou still deplor'st thy absence from her face,
 Howe'er averse to thine. But swift relief 780
 From indignation borrow. Call to mind
 Thy injuries. Th' auspicious fortune bless,
 Which led thee far from calumny and fraud,
 To peace, to honour in the Persian court.

As Demaratus with a grateful mind 785
 His answer was preparing, Persia's king
 Stern interrupted. Soon as morning shines,
 Do you, Tigranes and Phraortes, head
 The Medes and Cissians. Bring these Grecians
 bound.

THIS said, the monarch to his camp returns. 790
 Th' attendant princes reascend their cars,
 Save Hyperanthes, by the Carian queen
 Detain'd,

Detain'd, who thus began. Impartial, brave,
 Nurs'd in a court, yet virtuous, let my heart
 To thee its feelings undisguis'd reveal. 795
 Thou hear'st thy royal brother. He demands
 These Grecians bound. Why stops his mandate
 there ?

Why not command the mountains to remove,
 Or sink to level plains. Yon Spartans view,
 Their weighty arms, their countenance. To die 800
 My gratitude instructs me in the cause
 Of our imperial master. To succeed
 Is not within the shadow of my hopes
 At this dire pass. What evil genius sways ?
 Tigranes, false Argestes, and the rest 805

In name a council, ceaseless have oppos'd
 My dictates, oft repeated in despight
 Of purpled flatt'ers, to embark a force,
 Which, pouring on Laconia, might confine
 These sons of valour to their own defence. 810

Vain are my words, The royal ear admits
 Their sound alone ; while adulation's notes
 In Siren sweetness penetrate his heart,
 There lodge ensnaring mischief. In a sigh.
 To her the Prince. O faithful to thy lord, 815
 Discreet adviser, and in action firm,

What can I answer ? My afflicted soul
 Must seek its refuge in a feeble hope.
 Thou may'st be partial to thy Doric race,
 May'st magnify our danger. Let me hope, 820
 Whate'er the danger, if extreme, believe,

That Hyperanthes for his prince can bleed
Not with less zeal, than Spartans for their laws.

THEY separate. To Xerxes she repairs.
The queen, surrounded by the Carian guard, 825
Stays and retraces with sagacious ken
The destin'd field of war, the vary'd space,
Its depth, its confines both of hill and sea.
Mean time a scene more splendid hath allur'd
Her son's attention. His transported sight 830
With ecstasy like worship long pursues
The pomp of Xerxes in retreat, the throne,
Which shew'd their idol to the nations round,
The bounding steeds, caparison'd in gold,
The plumes, the chariots, standards. He excites 835
Her care, express'd in these pathetic strains.

Look on the king with gratitude. His fire
Protected thine. Himself upholds our state.
By loyalty inflexible repay
The obligation. To immortal pow'rs 840
The adoration of thy soul confine;
And look undazzled on the pomp of man
Most weak, when highest. Then the jealous gods
Watch to supplant him. They his paths, his courts,
His chambers fill with flatt'ry's pois'nous swarms, 845
Whose honey'd bane, by kingly pride devour'd,
Consumes the health of kingdoms. Here the boy
By an attention, which surpass'd his years,
Unlocks her inmost bosom. Thrice accurs'd
Be those, th' indignant heroine pursues, 850
Those, who have tempted their imperial lord
To

To that prepoſt'rous arrogance, which caſt
 Chains in the deep to manacle the waves,
 Chaffis'd with ſtripes in heav'n's offended fight 855
 The Hellespont, and fondly now demands
 The Spartans bound. O child, my ſoul's delight,
 Train'd by my care to equitable ſway
 And imitation of the gods by deeds
 To merit their proteſtion, heed my voice. 860
 They, who alone can tame, or ſwell the floods,
 Compoſe the winds, or guide their ſtrong career,
 O'erwhelming human greatneſs, will confound
 Such vanity in mortals. On our fleet
 Their indignation hath already fall'n. 865
 Perhaps our boaſted army is prepar'd
 A prey, for death to vindicate their pow'r.

THIS ſaid, a curious ſearch in ev'ry part
 Her eye renews. Adjoining to the ſtreights,
 Fresh bloom'd a thicket of entwining ſhrubs, 870
 A ſeeming fence to ſome ſequeſter'd ground,
 By travellers unbeaten. Swift her guards
 Addreſs'd their ſpears to part the pliant boughs.
 Held back, they yield a paſſage to the queen,
 And princely boy. Delicious to their ſight 875
 Soft dales, mæandring, ſhew their flow'ry laps
 Among rude piles of nature. In their ſides
 Of rock are manſions hewn; nor loaden trees
 Of cluster'd fruit are wanting: but no ſound,
 Except of brooks in murmur, and the ſong 880
 Of winged warblers, meets the liſt'ning ear.
 No grazing herd, no flock, nor human form
 Is ſeen, no careful huſband at his toil,

Beside her threshold no industrious wife,
 No playful child. Instructive to her son 885
 The princess then. Already these abodes
 Are desolate. Once happy in their homes
 Th' inhabitants forsake them. Pleasing scene
 Of nature's bounty, soon will savage Mars
 Deform the lovely ringlets of thy shrubs, 890
 And coarsely pluck thy violated fruits .
 Unripe; will deafen with his clangour fell
 Thy tuneful choirs. I mourn thy destin'd spoil,
 Yet come thy first despoiler. Captains, plant,
 Ere morning breaks, my secret standard here. 895
 Come, boy, away. Thy safety will I trust
 To Demaratus; while thy mother tries
 With these her martial followers, what sparks,
 Left by our Doric fathers, yet inflame
 Their sons and daughters in a stern debate 900
 With other Dorians, who have never breath'd
 The soft'ning gales of Asia, never bow'd
 In forc'd allegiance to Barbarian thrones.
 Thou heed my order. Those ingenuous looks
 Of discontent suppress. For thee this fight 905
 Were too severe a lesson. Thou mightst bleed
 Among the thousands, fated to expire
 By Sparta's lance. Let Artemisia die,
 Ye all-dispensing rulers, but protect
 Her son. She ceas'd. The lioness, who reigns 910
 Queen of the forest, terrible in strength,
 And prone to fury, thus, by nature taught,
 Melts o'er her young in blandishment and love.

Now

Now slowly tow'rd's the Persian camp her steps
 In silence she directed ; when a voice, 915
 Sent from a rock, accessible which seem'd
 To none, but feather'd passengers of air,
 By this reproof detain'd her. Caria's queen
 Art thou, to Greece by Doric blood ally'd ?
 Com'st thou to lay her fruitful meadows waste, 920
 Thou homager of tyrants ? Upward gaz'd
 Th' astonish'd princess. Lo ! a female shape,
 Tall and majestic, from th' impendent ridge
 Look'd awful down. A holy fillet bound
 Her graceful hair, loose flowing, Seldom wept 925
 Great Artemisia. Now a springing tear
 Between her eyelids gleam'd. Too true, she sigh'd,
 A homager of tyrants ! Voice austere,
 And presence half-divine ! Again the voice. •

O ARTEMISIA, hide thy Doric sword. 930
 Let no Barbarian tyrant through thy might,
 Thy counsels, valiant as thou art and wife,
 Consume the holy fanes, deface the tombs,
 Subvert the laws of Greece, her sons enthrall.

THE queen made no reply. Her breast-plate
 heav'd. 935

The tremulous attire of cov'ring mail
 Confess'd her struggle. She at length exclaim'd.

OLYMPIAN thund'rer, from thy neighb'ring hill
 Of sacred oaths remind me ! Then aside
 She turns to shun that majesty of form, 940
 In solemn sounds upbraiding. Torn her thoughts
 She

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE FIFTH. .

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas, rising by break of day, hears the intelligence, which Agis and Melibæus bring from the upper pass, then commands a body of Arcadians with the Platæans and Thespians, to be drawn out for battle, under the conduct of Demophilus, in that part of Thermopylæ, which lies close to the Phocian wall, from whence he harangues them. The enemy approaches. Diomedon kills Tigranes in single combat. Both armies join battle. Dithyrambus kills Phraortes. The Persians, entirely defeated, are pursued by Demophilus to the extremity of the pass. The Arcadians, inconsiderately advancing beyond it, fall into an ambush, which Artemisia had laid to cover the retreat of the Persians. She kills Clonius, but is herself repuls'd by Demophilus. Diomedon and Dithyrambus give chase to her broken forces over the plains, in the sight of Persia's camp, whence she receives no assistance. She rallies a small body, and, facing the enemy, disables Dithyrambus by a blow on his helmet. This puts the Grecians into some confusion, and gives her an opportunity of preserving the remainder of her Carians, by a timely retreat. She gains the camp, accuses Argestes of treachery, but pacified by Demaratus; is accompanied by him with a thousand horse, to collect the dead bodies of her soldiers for sepulchre.

AURORA

AURORA dawn'd. Leonidas arose.
With Melibæus, Agis, now return'd,
Address'd the king. Along the mountain's side
We bent our journey. On our way a voice
Loud from a crag on Melibæus call'd. 5
He look'd and answer'd. Mycon, ancient friend !
Far hast thou driv'n thy bearded train to-day ;
But fortunate thy presence. None like thee,
Inhabitant of Cæta from thy birth,
Can furnish that intelligence, which Greece 10
Wants for her safety. Mycon shew'd a track.
We mounted high. The summit, where we stopp'd,
Gave to the sight a prospect wide o'er hills,
O'er dales and forests, rocks, and dashing floods
In cataracts. The object of our search 15
Beneath us lay, the secret pass to Greece,
Where not five warriors in a rank can tread.
We thence descended to the Phocian camp,
Beset with scatter'd oaks, which rose and spread
In height and shade ; on whose sustaining boughs 20
Were hung in snowy folds a thousand tents,
Containing each a Phocian heavy-mail'd
With two light-weapon'd menials. Northward ends
The vale, contracted to that narrow streight,
Which first we saw with Mycon. Prudent care 25
Like yours alleviates mine, well-pleas'd the king
Reply'd. Now, Agis, from Arcadia's bands
Select a thousand spears. To them unite
The Thespians and Platæans. Draw their lines
Beneath the wall, which fortifies the pass. 30
There,

There, close-embod' d, will their might repulse
The num'rous foe. Demophilus salute.
Approv'd in martial service him I name
The chief supreme. Obedient to his will
Th' appointed warriors, issuing from the tents, 35
Fill their deep files, and watch the high command.
So round their monarch in his stormy hall
The winds assemble. From his dusky throne
His dreadful mandates Æolus proclaims
To swell the main, or heav'n with clouds de-
form, 40
Or bend the forest from the mountain's brow.
Laconia's leader from the rampart's height
To battle thus the list'ning host inflames.

THIS day, O Grecians, countrymen and friends,
Your wives, your offspring, your paternal seats, 45
Your parents, country, liberty and laws
Demand your swords. You gen'rous, active, brave,
Vers'd in the various discipline of Mars,
Are now to grapple with ignoble foes,
In war unskilful, nature's basest dross, 50
And thence a monarch's mercenary slaves.
Relax'd their limbs, their spirits are deprav'd
By eastern sloth and pleasures. Hire their cause,
Their only fruit of victory is spoil.
They know not freedom, nor its lib'ral cares. 55
Such is the flow'r of Asia's host. The rest,
Who fill her boasted numbers, are a croud,
Forc'd from their homes ; a populace in peace
By jealous tyranny disarm'd, in war
Their tyrant's victims. Taught in passive grief 60

To bear the rapine, cruelty and spurns
 Of Xerxes' mercenary band, they pine
 In servitude to slaves. With terror sounds
 The trumpet's clangour in their trembling ears.
 Unwonted loads, the buckler and the lance 65
 Their hands sustain, encumber'd, and present
 The mockery of war——But ev'ry eye
 Shoots forth impatient flames. Your gallant breasts
 Too long their swelling spirit have confin'd.
 Go then, ye sons of liberty ; go, sweep 70
 These bondmen from the field. Resistless rend
 The glitt'ring standard from their servile grasp.
 Hurl to the ground their ignominious heads,
 The warrior's helm profaning. Think, the shades
 Of your forefathers lift their sacred brows 75
 Here to enjoy the glory of their sons.

HE spake. Loud pæans issue from the Greeks.
 In fierce reply Barbarian shouts ascend
 From hostile nations, thronging down the pass.
 Such is the roar of Ætnà, when his mouth 80
 Displodes combustion from his sulph'rous depths
 To blast the smiles of nature. Dauntless stood
 In deep array before the Phocian wall
 The Phalanx, wedg'd with implicated shields,
 And spears protended, like the graceful range 85
 Of arduous elms, whose interwoven boughs
 Before some rural palace wide expand
 Their venerable umbrage to retard
 The North's impetuous wing. As o'er the main
 In lucid rows the rising waves reflect 90
 The sun's effulgence ; so the Grecian helms
Return'd

Return'd his light, which o'er their convex pour'd
A splendour, scatter'd through the dancing plumes.

Down rush the foes. Exulting in their van,
Their haughty leader shakes his threat'ning lance, 95
Provoking battle. Instant from his rank
Diomedon bursts furious. On he strides,
Confronts Tigranes, whom he thus defies.

Now art thou met, Barbarian. Wouldst thou prove
Thy actions equal to thy vaunts, command 100
Thy troops to halt, while thou and I engage.

TIGRANES, turning to the Persians, spake.
My friends and soldiers, check your martial haste;
While my strong lance that Grecian's pride con-
founds.

He ceas'd. In dreadful opposition soon 105
Each combatant advanc'd. Their sinewy hands
Grip'd fast their spears, high-brandish'd. Thrice they
drove

With well-directed force the pointed steel
At either's throats, and thrice their wary shields
Repell'd the menac'd wound. The Asian chief 110
At length, with pow'rs collected for the stroke,
His weapon rivets in the Grecian targe.
Aside Diomedon inclines, and shuns
Approaching fate ; then all his martial skill
Undaunted summons. His forsaken spear 115
Beside him cast, his falchion he unsheaths,
The blade, descending on Tigranes' arm,
That instant struggling to redeem his lance,
The nervous hand dislevers. Pale affright

Unmans the Persian ; while his active foe .120
 Full on his neck discharg'd the rapid sword,
 Which open'd wide the purple gates of death.
 Low sinks Tigranes in eternal shade.
 His prostrate limbs the conqueror bestrides ;
 Then in a tuft of blood-distilling hair 125
 His hand entwining, from the mangled trunk
 The head disjoins, and whirls with matchless strength
 Among the adverse legions. All in dread
 Recoil'd, where'er the ghastly visage flew
 In sanguine circles, and pursu'd its track 130
 Of horror through the air. Not more amaz'd,
 A barb'rous nation, whom the cheerful dawn
 Of science ne'er illumin'd, view on high
 A meteor, waving its portentous fires ;
 Where oft, as superstition vainly dreams, 135
 Some demon sits amid the baneful blaze,
 Dispersing plague and desolation round.
 Awhile the stern Diomedon remain'd
 Triumphant o'er the dire dismay, which froze
 The heart of Persia ; then with haughty pace .140
 In sullen joy among his gladsome friends
 Resum'd his station. Still the hostile throng
 In consternation motionless suspend
 The charge. Their drooping hearts Phraortes warms.

HEAV'N ! can one leader's fate appal this host, 145
 Which counts a train of princes for its chiefs ?
 Behold Phraortes. From Niphates' ridge
 I draw my subject files. My hardy toil
 Through pathless woods and deserts hath explor'd

The

The tiger's cavern. This unconquer'd hand 150
 Hath from the lion rent his shaggy hide.
 So through this field of slaughter will I chase
 Yon vaunting Greek. His ardent words revive
 Declining valour in the van. His lance
 Then in the rear he brandishes. The croud 155
 Before his threat'ning ire, affrighted, roll
 Their numbers headlong on the Grecian steel.
 Thus with his trident ocean's angry god
 From their vast bottom turns the mighty mass
 Of waters upward, and o'erwhelms the beach. 160

TREMENDOUS frown'd the fierce Platæan chief
 Full in the battle's front. His ample shield
 Like a strong bulwark prominent he rais'd
 Before the line. There thunder'd all the storm
 Of darts and arrows. His undaunted train 165
 In emulating ardour charg'd the foe.
 Where'er they turn'd the formidable spears,
 Which drench'd the glebe of Marathon in blood,
 Barbarian dead lay heap'd. Diomedon
 Led on the slaughter. From his nodding crest 170
 The sable plumes shook terror. Asia's host
 Shrunk back, as blasted by the piercing beams
 Of that unconquerable sword, which fell
 With lightning's swiftness on dissever'd helms,
 And, menacing Tigranes' doom to all, 175
 Their multitude dispers'd. The furious chief,
 Encompass'd round by carnage, and besmear'd
 With sanguine drops, inflames his warlike friends.

O DITHYRAMBUS, let thy deeds this day
 Surmount their wonted lustre. Thou in arms, 180

Demophilus, worn grey, thy youth recal.
 Behold, these slaves without resistance bleed.
 Advance, my hoary friend. Propitious fame
 Smile on thy years. She grants thy aged hand
 To pluck fresh laurels for thy honour'd brow. 185

As, when endu'd with Promethæan heat,
 The molten clay respir'd ; a sudden warmth
 Glows in the venerable Thespian's veins ;
 In every sinew new-born vigour swells.
 His falchion, thund'ring on Cheraſmes' helm, 190
 The forehead cleaves. Ecbatana to war
 Sent forth Cheraſmes. From her potent gates
 He, proud in hope, her swarming numbers led.
 Him Ariazus and Peucestes join'd,
 His martial brothers. They attend his fate, 195
 By Dithyrambus pierc'd. Their hoary fire
 Shall o'er his solitary palace roam ;
 Lamenting loud his childless years, shall curse
 Ambition's fury, and the lust of war,
 Then, pining, bow in anguish to the grave. 200

NEXT by the fierce Platæan's fatal sword
 Expir'd Demates, once the host and friend
 Of fall'n Tigranes. By his side to fight
 He left his native bands. Of Syrian birth
 In Daphné he resided near the grove, 205
 Whose hospitable laurels in their shade
 Conceal'd the virgin fugitive averſe
 To young Apollo. Hither ſhe retir'd
 Far from her parent ſtream. Here ſables feign,
 Herself a laurel chang'd her golden hair 210
 To verdant leaves in this retreat, the grove

Of

Of Daphné call'd, the seat of rural bliss,
Fann'd by the breath of Zephyrs, and with rills
From bubbling founts irriguous, Syria's boast,
The happy rival of Thessalia's vale, 215
Now hid for ever from Damates' eyes.

DEMOPHILUS, wise leader, soon improves
Advantage. All the vet'rans of his troop,
In age his equals, to condense the files,
To rivet close their bucklers he commands. 220
As some broad vessel, heavy in her strength,
But well-compacted, when a fav'ring gale
Invites the skilful master to expand
The sails at large, her slow but steady course
Impels through myriads of dividing waves ; 225
So, unresisted, through Barbarian throngs
The hoary phalanx pass'd. Arcadia's sons
Pursu'd more swift. Gigantic Clonius press'd
The yielding Persians, who before him sunk,
Crush'd like vile stubble underneath the steps 230
Of some glad peasant, visiting his fields
Of new-shorn harvest. On the gen'ral rout
Phraortes look'd intrepid still. He sprang
O'er hills of carnage to confront the foe.
His own inglorious friends he thus reproach'd. 235

FLY then, ye cowards, and desert your chief.
Yet single here my target shall oppose
The shock of thousands. Raging, he impels
His deathful point through Aristander's breast.
Him Dithyrambus lov'd. A sacred bard, 240
Rever'd for justice, for his verse renown'd,
He sung the deeds of heroes, those, who sell,

Or those, who conquer'd in their country's cause,
 Th' enraptur'd soul inspiring with the love
 Of glory, earn'd by virtue. His high strain 245
 The muses favour'd from their neighb'ring bow'rs,
 And bless'd with heav'nly melody his lyre.
 No more from Thespia shall his feet ascend
 The shady steep of Helicon; no more
 The stream divine of Aganippe's fount 250
 Bedew his lip harmonious: nor his hands,
 Which, dying, grasp the unforfaken lance,
 And prostrate buckler, ever more accord
 His lofty numbers to the sounding shell.
 Lo! Dithyrambus weeps. Amid the rage 255
 Of war and conquest swiftly-gushing tears
 Find one sad moment's interval to fall
 On his pale friend. But soon the victor proves
 His stern revenge. Through shield and corselet
 plung'd,
 His forceful blade divides the Persian's chest; 260
 Whence issue streams of royal blood, deriv'd
 From ancestors, who sway'd in Ninus old
 Th' Assyrian sceptre. He to Xerxes' throne
 A tributary satrap rul'd the vales,
 Where Tigris swift between the parted hills 265
 Of tall Niphates drew his foamy tide,
 Impregnating the meads. Phraortes sinks,
 Not instantly expiring. Still his eyes
 Flash indignation, while the Persians fly.

BEYOND the Malian entrance of the streights 270
 Th' Arcadians rush; when, unperceiv'd, till felt,
 Spring from concealment in a thicket deep

New swarms of warriors, clustering on the flank
 Of those unwary Grecians. Tow'rd's the bay
 They shrink. They totter on the fearful edge, 275
 Which overhangs a precipice. Surpris'd,
 The strength of Clonius fails. His giant bulk
 Beneath the chieftain of th' assailing band
 Falls prostrate. Thespians and Plataeans wave
 Auxiliar ensigns. They encounter foes, 280
 Resembling Greeks in discipline and arms.
 Dire is the shock. What less, than Caria's queen
 In their career of victory could check
 Such warriors? Fierce the struggles; while the
 rout

Of Medes and Cissians carry to the camp 285
 Contagious terror; thence no succour flows.
 Demophilus stands firm; the Carian band
 At length recoil before him. Keen pursuit
 He leaves to others, like th' almighty fire,
 Who sits unshaken on his throne, while floods, 290
 His instruments of wrath o'erwhelm the earth,
 And whirlwinds level on her hills the growth
 Of proudest cedars. Through the yielding croud
 Plataea's chief and Dithyrambus range
 Triumphant side by side. Thus o'er the field, 295
 Where bright Alpheus heard the rattling car,
 And concave hoof along his echoing banks,
 Two gen'rous coursfers, link'd in mutual reins,
 In speed, in ardour equal, beat the dust
 To reach the glories of Olympia's goal. 300
 Th' intrepid heroes on the plain advance,
 They press the Carian rear. Not long the queen
 Endures

Endures that shame. Her people's dying groans
 Transpierce her bosom. On their bleeding limbs
 She looks maternal, feels maternal pangs. 305
 A troop she rallies. Goddess-like she turns,
 Not less, than Pallas with her Gorgon shield.
 Whole ranks she covers like th' imperial bird
 Extending o'er a nest of callow young
 Her pinion broad, and pointing fierce her beak, 310
 Her claws outstretch'd. The Thespian's ardent
 hand,

From common lives refraining, hastes to snatch
 More splendid laurels from that nobler head.
 His pond'rous falchion, swift descending, bears
 Her buckler down, thence glancing, cuts the
 thong 315

Which holds her headpiece fast. That golden fence
 Drops down. Thick tresses, unconfin'd, disclose
 A female warrior ; one, whose summer pride
 Of fleeting beauty had begun to fade,
 Yet by th' heroic character supply'd, 320
 Which grew more awful, as the touch of time
 Remov'd the soft'ning graces. Back he steps,
 Unmann'd by wonder. With indignant eyes,
 Fire-darting, she advances. Both her hands
 Full on his crest discharge the furious blade. 325
 The forceful blow compels him to recede
 Yet further back, unwounded, though confus'd.
 His soldiers flock around him. From a scene
 Of blood more distant speeds Plataea's chief.
 The fair occasion of suspended fight 330
 She seizes, bright in glory wheels away,

And

And saves her Carian remnant. While his friend
In fervent sounds Diomedon bespake.

If thou art slain, I curse this glorious day.
Be all thy trophies, be my own accurs'd. 335

THE youth, recover'd, answers in a smile.
I am unhurt. The weighty blow proclaim'd
The queen of Caria, or Bellona's arm.
Our longer stay Demophilus may blame.
Let us prevent his call. This said, their steps 340
They turn, both striding through empurpled heaps
Of arms, and mangled slain, themselves with gore
Distain'd like two grim tigers, who have forc'd
A nightly mansion, on the desert rais'd
By some lone-wand'ring traveller, then, dy'd 345
In human crimson, through the forest deep
Back to their covert's dreary gloom retire.

STERN Artemisia, sweeping o'er the field,
Bursts into Asia's camp. A furious look
She casts around. Abrocomes remote 350
With Hyperanthes from the king were sent.
She sees Argestes in that quarter chief,
Who from battalions numberless had spar'd
Not one to succour, but his malice gorg'd
With her distress. Her anger now augments. 355
Revenge frowns gloomy on her darken'd brow
He cautious moves to Xerxes, where he sat
High on his car. She follows. Lost her helm,
Resign'd to sportive winds her cluster'd locks,
Wild, but majestic like the waving boughs 360
Of some proud elm, the glory of the grove,
And full in foliage. Her emblazon'd shield

With

With gore is tarnish'd. Pale around are seen
All faint, all ghastly from repeated wounds
Her bleeding soldiers. Brandishing her sword, 365
To them she points, to Xerxes thus she speaks.

BEHOLD these mangled Carians, who have spent
Their vital current in the king's defence,
Ev'n in his fight; while Medes and Cissians fled,
By these protected, whom Argestes saw 370
Pursu'd by slaughter to thy very camp,
Yet left unhelp'd to perish. Ruling fire,
Let Horomazes be thy name, or Jove;
To thee appealing, of the king I claim
A day for justice. Monarch, to my arm 375
Give him a prey. Let Artemisia's truth
Chastise his treason. With an eye submissive,
A mien obsequious, and a soothing tone
To cheat the king, to moderate her ire
Argestes utters these fallacious words. 380

MAY Horomazes leave the fiend at large
To blast my earthly happiness, confine
Amid the horrors of his own abode
My ghost hereafter, if the sacred charge
Of Xerxes' person was not my restraint, 385
My sole restraint! To him our all is due,
Our all how trifling, with his safety weigh'd!
His preservation I prefer to fame,
And bright occasion for immortal deeds
Forego in duty. Else my helpful sword 390
Fair heroine of Asia, hadst thou seen
Among the foremost blazing. Lo! the king
A royal present will on thee bestow,

Perfumes

Book V. L E O N I D A S. 107

Perfumes and precious unguents on the dead,
A golden wreath to each survivor brave. 395

Aw'd by her spirit, by the flatt'ers spell
Deluded, languid through dismay and shame
At his defeat, the monarch for a time
Sat mute, at length unlock'd his falt'ring lips.

THOU hear'st, great princeſs. Reſt content. His
words 400

I ratify. Yet farther, I proclaim
Thee of my train firſt counſellor and chief.

O EAGLE-EY'D diſcernment in the king!
O wiſdom equal to his boundleſs power!
The purpled ſycophant exclaims. Thou ſeeſt 405
Her matchleſs talents. Wanting her, thy fleet,
The floating bulwark of our hopes, laments,
Foil'd in her abſence, in her conduct ſafe.
Thy penetrating fight directs the field;
There let her worth be hazarded no more. 410

THY words are wiſe, the blinded prince rejoins.
Return, brave Carian, to thy naval charge.

THUS to remove her from the royal ear
Malicious guile prevails. Redoubled rage
Swells in her boſom. Demaratus ſees 415
And calms the ſtorm by rend'ring up his charge
To her maternal hand. Her ſon belov'd
Diſpels the furies. Then the Spartan thus.

O ARTEMISIA, of the king's command
Be thou obſervant. To thy ſlaughter'd friends 420
Immediate care, far other, than revenge,
Is due. The ravens gather. From his neſt
Among thoſe cliffs the eagle's rapid flight

Denotes

Denotes his scent of carnage. Thou, a Greek,
Well know'st the duty sacred to the dead. 425

Depart ; thy guide is piety. Collect,
For honourable sepulchres prepare
Those bodies, mark'd with honourable wounds.

I will assist thee. Xerxes will entrust
To my command a chosen guard of horse. 430

As oft, when storms in summer have o'ercast
The night with double darkness, only pierc'd
By heav'n's blue fire, while thunder shakes the pole,
The orient sun, diffusing genial warmth,
Refines the troubled air ; the blast is mute ; 435
Death-pointed flames disperse ; and placid Jove
Looks down in smiles ; so prudence from the lips
Of Demaratus, by his tone, his mien,
His aspect strength'ning smooth persuasion's flow,
Compos'd her spirit. She with him departs. 440
The king assigns a thousand horse to guard
Th' illustrious exile, and heroic dame.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK,

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

The Grecian commanders, after the pursuit, retire for refreshment to a cave in the side of Mount Oeta. Demophilus returns to the camp; Diomedon remains in the cave; while Dithyrambus, discovering a passage through it, ascends to the Temple of the Muses. After a long discourse with Melissa, the daughter of Oileus, she entrusts him with a solemn message to Leonidas. Dithyrambus deposes this charge to Megistias, the augur. Leonidas, recalling the forces, first engag'd, sends down a fresh body. Diomedon and Dithyrambus are permitted, on their own request, to continue in the field with the Platæans. By the advice of Diomedon, the Grecians advance to the broadest part of Thermopylæ, where they form a line of twenty in depth, consisting of the Platæans, Mantineans, Tegæans, Thebans, Corinthians, Phliæans and Mycenæans. The Spartans compose a second line in a narrower part. Behind them are placed the light arm'd troops under Alpheus, and further back a phalanx of Locrians under Medon, the son of Oileus. Dieneces commands the whole.

NOW Dithyrambus and Plataea's chief,
 Their former post attaining, had rejoin'd
 Demophilus. Recumbent on his shield
 Phraortes, gasping there, attracts their sight.
 To him in pity Thespia's gallant youth 5
 Approaching, thus his gen'rous soul express'd.

LIV'ST thou, brave Persian? By propitious Jove,
 From whom the pleasing stream of mercy flows
 Through mortal bosoms, less my soul rejoic'd,
 When fortune blest'd with victory my arm, 10
 Than now to raise thee from this field of death.

HIS languid eyes the dying prince unclos'd,
 Then with expiring voice. Vain man, forbear
 To proffer me, what soon thyself must crave.
 The day is quite extinguish'd in these orbs. 15
 One moment fate allows me to disdain
 Thy mercy, Grecian. Now I yield to death.

THIS effort made, the haughty spirit fled.
 So shoots a meteor's transitory gleam
 Through nitrous folds of black nocturnal clouds 20
 Then dissipates for ever. O'er the corse
 His rev'rend face Demophilus inclin'd,
 Pois'd on his lance, and thus address'd the slain.

ALAS! how glorious were that bleeding breast,
 Had justice brac'd the buckler on thy arm, 25
 And to preserve a people bade thee die.
 Who now shall mourn thee! Thy ungrateful king
 Will soon forget thy worth. Thy native land
 May raise an empty monument, but feel
 No public sorrow. Thy recorded name 30
 Shall

Shall wake among thy countrymen no sighs
 For their lost hero. What to them avail'd
 Thy might, thy dauntless spirit? Not to guard
 Their wives, their offspring from th' oppressor's
 hand ;

But to extend oppression didst thou fall, 35
 Perhaps with inborn virtues in thy soul,
 Which, but thy froward destiny forbade,
 By freedom cherish'd, might have bless'd mankind.
 All-bounteous nature, thy impartial laws
 To no selected race of men confine 40
 The sense of glory, fortitude, and all
 The nobler passions, which exalt the mind,
 And render life illustrious. These thou plant'st
 In ev'ry soil. But freedom, like the sun,
 Must warm the gen'rous seeds. By her alone 45
 They bloom, they flourish ; while oppression blasts
 The tender virtues ; hence a spurious growth,
 False honour, savage valour taint the soul,
 And wild ambition ; hence rapacious pow'r
 The ravag'd earth unpeoples, and the brave, 50
 A feast for dogs, the ensanguin'd field bestrew.

He said. Around the venerable man
 The warriors throng'd attentive. Conquest hush'd
 Its joyful transports. O'er the horrid field,
 Rude scene so late of tumult, all was calm. 55
 So, when the song of Thracian Orpheus drew
 To Hebrus' margin from their dreary seats
 The savage breed, which Hæmus, wrapp'd in
 clouds,

Pangæus cold, and Rhodopean snows

In blood and discord nurs'd, the soothing strain 60
 Flow'd with enchantment through the ravish'd ear,
 Their fierceness melted, and, amaz'd, they learn'd
 The sacred laws of justice, which the bard
 Mix'd with the music of his heav'nly string.

MEAN time th' Arcadians with inverted arms 65
 And banners, sad and solemn on their shields
 The giant limbs of Clonius bore along
 To spread a gen'ral woe. The noble corse,
 Dire spectacle of carnage, passing by
 To those last honours, which the dead partake 70
 Struck Dithyrambus. Swift his melted eye
 Review'd Phraortes on the rock supine;
 Then on the sage Demophilus he look'd
 Intent, and spake. My heart retains thy words.
 This hour may witness, how rapacious pow'r 75
 The earth unpeoples. Clonius is no more.
 But he, by Greece lamented, will acquire
 A signal tomb. This gallant Persian, crush'd
 Beneath my fortune, bath'd in blood still warm,
 May lie forgotten by his thankless king; 80
 Yet not by me neglected shall remain
 A naked corse. The good old man replies.

My gen'rous child, deserving that success,
 Thy arm hath gain'd ! When vital breath is fled,
 Our friends, our foes are equal dust. Both claim 85
 The fun'ral passage to that future seat
 Of being, where no enmity revives.
 There Greek and Persian will together quaff
 In amaranthine bow'rs the cup of bliss

Book VI. L E O N I D A S. 113

Immortal. Him, thy valour slew on earth, 90
In that blest'd region thou mayst find a friend.

THIS said, the ready Thespians he commands
To lift Phraortes from his bed of death,
Th' empurpled rock. Outstretch'd on targets broad,
Sustain'd by hands late hostile, now humane, 95
He follows Clonius to the fun'ral pyre.

A CAVE not distant from the Phocian wall
Through Œta's cloven side had nature form'd
In spacious windings. This in moss she clad ;
O'er half the entrance downward from the roots 100
She hung the shaggy trunks of branching firs,
To heav'n's hot ray impervious. Near the mouth
Relucent laurels spread before the fun
A broad and vivid foliage. High above,
The hill was darken'd by a solemn shade, 105
Diffus'd from ancient cedars. To this cave
Diomedon, Demophilus resort,
And Thespia's youth. A deep recess appears,
Cool, as the azure grot, where Thetis sleeps
Beneath the vaulted ocean. Whisper'd sounds 110
Of waters, trilling from the riven stone
To feed a fountain on the rocky floor,
In purest streams o'erflowing to the sea,
Allure the warriors, hot with toil and thirst,
To this retreat serene. Against the sides 115
Their disencumber'd hands repose their shields ;
The helms they loosen from their glowing cheeks ;
Propp'd on their spears, they rest : when Agis brings
From Lacedæmon's leader these commands,

LEONIDAS recalls you from your toils, 120
 Ye meritorious Grecians. You have reap'd
 The first bright harvest on the field of fame.
 Our eyes in wonder from the Phocian wall
 On your unequall'd deeds incessant gaz'd.

To whom Platæa's chief. Go, Agis, say 125
 To Lacedæmon's ruler, that, untir'd,
 Diomedon can yet exalt his spear,
 Nor feels the armour heavy on his 'limbs.
 Then shall I quit the contest? Ere he sinks,
 Shall not this early sun again behold 130
 The slaves of Xerxes tremble at my lance,
 Should they adventure on a fresh assault?

To him the Thespian youth. My friend, my
 guide

To noble actions, since thy gen'rous heart
 Intent on fame disdains to rest, O grant, 135
 I too thy glorious labours may partake,
 May learn once more to imitate thy deeds.
 Thou, gentlest Agis, Sparta's king entreat
 Not to command us from the field of war.

Yes, persevering heroes, he reply'd, 140
 I will return, will Sparta's king entreat
 Not to command you from the field of war.

THEN interpos'd Demophilus. O friend,
 Who leadst to conquest brave Platæa's sons;
 Thou too, lov'd offspring of the dearest man, 145
 Who dost restore a brother to my eyes;
 My soul your magnanimity applauds:
 But, O reflect, that unabating toil
 Subdues the mightiest. Valour will repine,

When

When the weak hand obeys the heart no more. 150
 Yet I, declining through the weight of years,
 Will not assign a measure to your strength.
 If still you find your vigour undecay'd,
 Stay and augment your glory. So, when time
 Casts from your whiten'd heads the helm aside ; 155
 When in the temples your enfeebled arms
 Have hung their consecrated shields, the land,
 Which gave you life, in her defence employ'd,
 Shall then by honours, doubled on your age,
 Requite the gen'rous labours of your prime. 160

So spake the senior, and forsook the cave.
 But from the fount Diomedon receives
 Th' o'erflowing waters in his concave helm,
 Addressing thus the genius of the stream.

WHOE'ER thou art, divinity unstain'd 165
 Of this fair fountain, till unsparing Mars
 Heap'd carnage round thee, bounteous are thy
 streams
 To me, who ill repay thee. I again
 Thy silver-gleaming current must pollute,
 Which, mix'd with gore, shall tinge the Mælian
 slime. 170

HE said, and lifted in his brimming casque
 The bright, refreshing moisture. Thus repairs
 The spotted panther to Hydaspes' side,
 Or eastern Indus, feasted on the blood
 Of some torn deer, which nigh his cruel grasp 175
 Had roam'd, unheeding, in the secret shade ;
 Rapacious o'er the humid brink he sloops,

And

Whose voices charm its gloom. In smiles rejoin'd
 Diomedon. I see thy soul enthrall'd.
 Me thou wouldst rank among th' unletter'd rout
 Of yon Barbarians, should I press thy stay.
 Time favours too. Till Agis be return'd, 210
 We cannot act. Indulge thy eager search.
 Here will I wait, a sentinel unmov'd,
 To watch thy coming. In exploring haste
 Th' impatient Thespian penetrates the cave.
 He finds it bounded by a steep ascent 215
 Of rugged steps ; where down the hollow rock
 A modulation clear, distinct and flow
 In movement solemn from a lyric string,
 Dissolves the stagnant air to sweet accord
 With these sonorous lays. Celestial maids ! 220
 While, from our cliffs contemplating the war,
 We celebrate our heroes. O impart
 Orphëan magic to the pious strain !
 That from the mountain we may call the groves,
 Swift motion through these marble fragments
 breathe 225
 To overleap the high Cætean ridge,
 And crush the fell invaders of our peace.

THE animated hero upward springs
 Light, as a kindled vapour, which, confin'd
 In subterranean cavities, at length 230
 Pervading, rives the surface to enlarge
 The long-imprison'd flame. Ascending soon,
 He sees, he stands abash'd, then rev'rent kneels.

AN aged temple with insculptur'd forms
Of Jove's harmonious daughters, and a train 235
Of nine bright virgins, round their priestesses rang'd,
Who stood in awful majesty, receive
His unexpected feet. The song is hush'd.
The measur'd movement on the lyric chord
In faint vibration dies. The priestesses sage, 240
Whose elevated port and aspect rose
To more than mortal dignity, her lyre
Consigning graceful to attendant hands,
Looks with reproof. The loose, uncover'd hair
Shades his inclining forehead ; while a flush 245
Of modest crimson dyes his youthful cheek.
Her pensive visage softens to a smile
On worth so blooming, which she thus accosts.

I SHOULD reprove thee, inadvertent youth,
Who through the sole access, by nature left 250
To this pure mansion, with intruding steps
Dost interrupt our lays. But rise. Thy sword
Perhaps embellish'd that triumphant scene,
Which wak'd these harps to celebrating notes.
What is the impress on thy warlike shield? 255

A GOLDEN eagle on my shield I bear,
Still bending low, he answers. She pursues.

ART thou possessor of that glorious orb,
By me distinguish'd in the late defeat
Of Asia, driv'n before thee ? Speak thy name. 260
Who is thy sire ? Where lies thy native seat ?
Com'st thou for glory to this fatal spot,
Or from Barbarian violence to guard

Book VI. L E O N I D A S. 119

A parent's age, a spouse, and tender babes,
Who call thee father ? Humbly he again. 265

I AM of Thespia, Dithyrambus nam'd,
The son of Harmatides. Snatch'd by fate,
He to his brother, and my second fire,
Demophilus, consign'd me. Thespia's sons
By him are led. His dictates I obey, 270
Him to resemble strive. No infant voice
Calls me a father. To the nuptial vow
I am a stranger, and among the Greeks
The least entitled to thy partial praise.

NONE more entitled, interpos'd the dame. 275
Deserving hero ! thy demeanour speaks,
It justifies the fame, so widely spread,
Of Harmatides' heir. O grace and pride
Of that fair city, which the Muses love,
Thee an accepted visitant I hail 280
In this their ancient temple. Thou shalt view
Their sacred haunts. Descending from the dome,
She thus pursues. First know, my youthful hours
Were exercis'd in knowledge. Homer's Muse
To daily meditation won my soul, 285
With my young spirit mix'd undying sparks
Of her own rapture. By a father sage
Conducted, cities, manners, men I saw,
Their institutes and customs. I return'd.
The voice of Locris call'd me to sustain 290
The holy function here. Now throw thy light
Across that meadow, whose enliven'd blades
Wave in the breeze, and glisten in the sun

Behind

Behind the hoary fane. My bleating train
 Are nourish'd there, a spot of plenty, spar'd 295
 From this surrounding wilderness. Remark
 That fluid mirror, edg'd by shrubs and flow'rs,
 Shrubs of my culture, flow'rs, by Iris dress'd.
 Nor pass that smiling concave in the hill,
 Whose pointed crags are soften'd to the sight 300
 By figs and grapes. She pauses; while around
 His eye, delighted, roves, in more delight
 Soon to the spot returning, where she flood
 A deity in semblance, o'er the place
 Presiding awful, as Minerva wise, 305
 August like Juno, like Diana pure,
 But not more pure, than fair. The beauteous lake,
 The pines wide-branching, falls of water clear,
 The multifarious glow on Flora's lap
 Lose all attraction, as her gracious lips 310
 Resume their tale. In solitude remote
 Here I have dwelt contemplative, serene.
 Oft through the rocks responsive to my lyre,
 Oft to th' Amphyctyons in assembly full,
 When at this shrine their annual vows they pay, 315
 In measur'd declamation I repeat
 The praise of Greece, her liberty and laws.
 From me the hinds, who tend their wand'ring goats
 In these rude purlieus, modulate their pipes
 To smoother cadence. Justice from my tongue 320
 Dissentions calms, which ev'n in deserts rend
 Th' unquiet heart of man. Now furious war
 My careful thoughts engages, which delight

To

To help the free, th' oppressor to confound.
Thy feet auspicious fortune hither brings. 325

In thee a noble messenger I find.

Go, in these words Leonidas address.

"Melissa, priests of the tuneful nine,

"By their behests invites thy honour'd feet

"To her divine abode. Thee, first of Greeks, 330

"To conference of high import she calls."

Th' obedient Thespian down the holy cave

Returns. His swiftness suddenly prevents

His friend's impatience, who salutes him thus.

LET thy adventure be hereafter told. 335

Look yonder. Fresh battalions from the camp

File through the Phocian barrier to construct

Another phalanx, moving tow'r of war,

Which scorns the strength of Asia. Let us arm ;

That, ready station'd in the glorious van, 340

We may secure permission from the king

There to continue, and renew the fight.

THAT instant brings Megistias near the grot.

To Sparta's phalanx his paternal hand

Was leading Menalippus. Not unheard 345

By Dithyrambus in their slow approach,

The father warns a young and lib'ral mind.

SPRUNG from a distant boundary of Greece,

A foreigner in Sparta, cherish'd there,

Instructed, honour'd, nor unworthy held 350

To fight for Lacedæmon in her line

Of discipline and valour, lo ! my son,

The hour is come to prove thy gen'rous heart,

That in thy hand not ill-entrusted, shine

The spear and buckler to maintain the cause 355
 Of thy protectress. Let thy mind recal
 Leonidas. On yonder bulwark plac'd,
 He overlooks the battle ; he discerns
 The bold and fearful. May the gods, I serve,
 Grant me to hear Leonidas approve 360
 My son ! No other boon my age implores.

THE augur paus'd. The animated cheek
 Of Menalippus glows. His eager look
 Demands the fight. This struck the tender fire,
 Who then with moisten'd eyes. Remember too 365
 A father sees thy danger. O ! my child,
 To me thy honour, as to thee, is dear ;
 Yet court not death. By ev'ry filial tie,
 By all my fondness, all my cares I sue !
 Amid' the conflict, or the warm pursuit 370
 Still by the wise Dienece's abide.

His prudent valour knows th' unerring paths
 Of glory. He admits thee to his side.
 He will direct thy ardour. Go — They part.

MEGISTIAS, turning, is accosted thus 375
 By Dithyrambus. Venerable seer,
 So may that son, whose merit I esteem,
 Whose precious head in peril I would die
 To guard, return in triumph to thy breast,
 As thou deliver'st to Laconia's king 380
 A high and solemn message. While anew
 The line is forming, from th' embattled field
 I must not stray, uncall'd. A sacred charge
 Through hallow'd lips will best approach the king.

Book VI. L E O N I D A S. 123

THE Acarnanian in suspense remains 385
And silence. Dithyrambus quick relates
Melissa's words, describes the holy grot,
Then quits th' instructed augur, and attends
Diomedon's loud call. That fervid chief
Was re-assuming his distinguish'd arms, 390
Which, as a splendid recompence he bore
From grateful Athens, for achievements bold ;
When he with brave Miltiades redeem'd
Her domes from Asian flames. The sculptur'd helm
Inclos'd his manly temples. From on high 395
A four-fold plumage nodded ; while beneath
A golden dragon with effulgent scales,
Itself the crest, shot terror. On his arm
He brac'd his buckler. Bord'ring on the rim,
Gorgonian serpents twin'd. Within, the form 400
Of Pallas, martial goddess, was emboss'd.
Low, as her feet, the graceful tunic flow'd.
Betwixt two gryffins on her helmet sat
A sphynx with wings expanded ; while the face
Of dire Medusa on her breast-plate frown'd. 405
One hand supports a javelin, which confounds ,
The pride of kings. The other leads along
A blooming virgin, Victory, whose brow
A wreath encircles. Laurels she presents ;
But from her shoulders all her plumes were
shorn, 410
In favour'd Athens ever now to rest.
This dread of Asia on his mighty arm
Diomedon uprear'd. He snatch'd his lance,
Then spake to Dithyrambus. See, my friend,

M 2

Alone

Alone of all the Grecians who sustain'd 415
The former onset, inexhausted stand
Platæa's sons. They well may keep the field,
Who with unslacken'd nerves endur'd that day,
Which saw ten myriads of Barbarians driv'n
Back to their ships, and Athens left secure. 420
Charge in our line. Amid the foremost rank
Thy valour shall be plac'd to share command,
And ev'ry honour with Platæa's chief.

HE said no more, but tow'rd's the Grecian van
Impetuous, ardent strode. Nor slow behind 425
The pride of Thespia, Dithyrambus mov'd
Like youthful Hermes in celestial arms ;
When lightly graceful with his feather'd feet
Along Scamander's flow'ry verge he pass'd
To aid th' incens'd divinities of Greece 430
Against the Phrygian tow'rs. Their eager haste
Soon brings the heroes to th' embattling ranks,
Whom thus the brave Diomedon exhorts.

NOR to contend, but vanquish are ye come.
Here in the blood of fugitives your spears 435
Shall, unoppos'd, be stain'd. My valiant friends,
But chief, ye men of Sparta, view that space,
Where from the Malian gulph more distant rise
Th' Cætæan rocks, and less confine the streights.
There if we range, extending wide our front, 440
An ampler scope to havock will be giv'n.

To him Dieneces. Platæan friend, •
Well dost thou counsel. On that widening ground
Close to the mountain place thy vet'ran files.
Proportion'd numbers from thy right shall stretch 445
Quite

Quite to the shore in phalanx deep like thine.
 The Spartans wedg'd in this contracted part
 Will I contain. Behind me Alpheus waits
 With lighter bodies. Further back the line
 Of Locris forms a strong reserve. He said. 450
 The diff'rent bands, confiding in his skill,
 Move on successive. The Platæans first
 Against the hill are station'd. In their van
 Is Dithyrambus rank'd. Triumphant joy
 Diffends their bosoms, sparkles in their eyes. 455

BLESS'D be the great Diomedon, they shout,
 Who brings another hero to our line.
 Hail! Dithyrambus. Hail! illustrious youth.
 Had tender age permitted, thou hadst gain'd
 An early palm at Marathon. His post 460
 He takes. His gladness blushes on his cheek
 Amid the foremost rank. Around him croud
 The long-try'd warriors. Their unnumber'd scars
 Discov'ring, they in ample phrase recount
 Their various dangers. He their wounds surveys 465
 In veneration, nor disdains to hear
 The oft-repeated tale. From Sparta's king
 Return'd, the gracious Agis these address'd.

LEONIDAS salutes Platæa's chief
 And Dithyrambus. To your swords he grants 470
 A further effort with Platæa's band,
 If yet by toil unconquer'd—but I see,
 That all, unyielding, court the promis'd fight.
 Hail! glorious veterans. This signal day
 May your victorious arms augment the wreaths 475
 Around

Around your venerable heads, and grace
Thermopylæ with Marathonian fame.

THIS said, he hastens back. Mean time advance
The Mantinean, Diophantus brave,
Then Hegesander, Tegea's dauntless chief, 480
Who near Diomedon in equal range
Erect their standards. Next the Thebans form.
Alcmæon, bold Eupalamus succeed
With their Corinthian and Phliasian bands.
Last on the Malian shore Mycenæ's youth 485
Aristobulus draws. From Cæta's side
Down to the bay in well-connected length
Each gleaming rank contains a hundred spears,
While twenty bucklers ev'ry file condense.
A sure support, Dieneses behind 490
Arrays the Spartans. Godlike Agis here,
There Menalippus by their leader stand
Two bulwarks. Breathing ardour in the rear,
The words of Alpheus fan the growing flame
Of expectation through his light-arm'd force; 495
While Polydorus present in his thoughts
To vengeance sharpens his indignant soul.

No foe is seen. No distant shout is heard.
This pause of action Dithyrambus chose.
The solemn scene on Cæta to his friend 500
He open'd large; portray'd Melissa's form,
Reveal'd her mandate; when Plataea's chief.

SUCH elevation of a female mind
Bespeaks Melissa worthy to obtain
The conference, she asks. This wond'rous dame 505
Amid her hymns conceives some lofty thought

To make these slaves, who loiter in their camp,
 Dread ev'n our women. But, my gentle friend,
 Say, Dithyrambus, whom the liquid spell
 Of song enchants, should I reproach the gods, 510
 Who form'd me cold to music's pleasing pow'r ?
 Or should I thank them, that the soft'ning charm
 Of sound, or numbers ne'er dissolv'd my soul ?
 Yet I confess, thy valour breaks that charm,
 Which may enrapture, not unman thy breast. 515

To whom his friend. Doth he, whose lays record
 The woes of Priam, and the Grecian fame,
 Doth he dissolve thy spirit ? Yet he flows
 In all the sweetness, harmony can breathe.

No, by the gods, Diomedon rejoins. 520

I feel that mighty muse. I see the car
 Of fierce Achilles, see th' encumber'd wheels
 O'er heroes driv'n, and clotted with their gore.
 Another too demands my soul's esteem,
 Brave Æschylus of Athens. I have seen 525
 His muse begirt by Furies, while she swell'd
 Her tragic numbers. Him in equal rage
 His country's foes o'erwhelming I beheld
 At Marathon. If Phœbus would diffuse
 Such fire through ev'ry bard, the tuneful band 530
 Might in themselves find heroes for their songs.

But, son of Harmatides, lift thine eye
 To yonder point, remotest in the bay.
 Those seeming clouds, which o'er the billows fleet
 Successive round the jutting land, are sails. 535
 Th' Athenian pendant hastens to salute

Leonidas.

Leonidas. O Æschylus, my friend,
First in the train of Phœbus, and of Mars,
Be thou on board ! Swift-bounding o'er the waves,
Come and be witness to heroic deeds ! 540
Brace thy strong harp with loftier-sounding chords
To celebrate this battle ! Fall, who may ;
But if they fall with honour, let their names
Round festive goblets in thy numbers ring,
And joy, not grief, accompany the song. 545

CONVERSING thus, their courage they beguil'd,
Which else, impatient of inactive hours,
At long-suspended glory had repin'd.

E N D O F T H E S I X T H B O O K .



L E O N I D A S.

A

P O E M.

IN TWELVE BOOKS.

By RICHARD GLOVER, Esq;

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V. O L. II.

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LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Megistias delivers Melissa's message to Leonidas. Medon, her brother, conducts him to the temple. She furnishes Leonidas with the means of executing a design he had premeditated to annoy the enemy. They are joined by a body of mariners under the command of Æschylus, a celebrated poet and warrior among the Athenians. Leonidas takes the necessary measures; and, observing from a summit of Oeta the motions of the Persian army, expects another attack: this is renewed with great violence by Hyperanthes, Abrocomes, and the principal Persian leaders, at the head of some chosen troops.

MEGISTIAS, urging to unwonted speed
His aged steps, by Dithyrambus charg'd
With sage Melissa's words, had now rejoin'd
The king of Lacedæmon. At his side
Was Maron pos'd, watchful to receive 5
His high injunctiōns. In the rear they stood
Behind two thousand Locrians, deep-array'd
By warlike Medon, from Oileus sprung.
Leonidas to them his anxious mind
Was thus disclosing. Medon, Maron, hear. 10

From this low rampart my exploring eye
 But half commands the action, yet hath mark'd
 Enough for caution. Yon barbarian camp,
 Immenſe, exhauſtleſs, deluging the ground
 With myriads, ſtill o'erflowing, may conſume 15
 By endleſs numbers, and unceaſing toil
 The Grecian ſtrength. Not marble is our fleſh,
 Nor adamant our ſinews. Sylvan pow'rs,
 Who dwell on Oeta, your ſuperior aid
 We muſt ſolicit. Your ſtupendous cliffs 20
 In thoſe looſe rocks and branchleſs trunks contain
 More fell annoyance, than the arm of man.

HE ended; when Megiſtias. Virtuous king,
 Meliſſa, prieſteſs of the tuneful nine,
 By their becheſts invites thy honour'd ſeet 25
 To her chaſte dwelling, ſeated on that hill.
 To conference of high import ſhe calls
 Thee, firſt of Grecians. Medon interpoſ'd.

SHE is my ſiſter. Juſtice rules her ways
 With piety and wiſdom. To her voice 30
 The nations round give ear. The muſes breathe
 Their inſpiration through her ſpotleſs ſoul,
 Which borders on divinity. She calls
 On thee. O truly ſtyl'd the firſt of Greeks,
 Regard her call Yon cliff's projecting head 35
 To thy diſcernment will afford a ſcope
 More full, more certain; thence thy ſkilful eye
 Will beſt direct the fight. Meliſſa's fire
 Was ever preſent to the king in thought,
 Who thus to Medon. Lead, Oileus' ſon. 40

Before

Before the daughter of Oileus place
 My willing feet. They hasten to the cave.
 Megistias, Maron follow. Through the rock
 Leonidas, ascending to the fane,
 Rose like the god of morning from the cell 45
 Of night, when, shedding cheerfulness and day
 On hill and vale emblaz'd with dewy gems,
 He gladdens nature. Lacedæmon's king,
 Majestically graceful and serene,
 Dispels the rigour in that solemn seat 50
 Of holy sequestration. On the face
 Of pensive-ey'd religion rapture glows
 In admiration of the god-like man.
 Advanc'd Melissa. He her proffer'd hand
 In hue, in purity like snow, receiv'd. 55
 A heav'n-illumin'd dignity of look
 On him she fix'd. Rever'd by all, she spake.
 HAIL ! chief of men, selected by the gods
 For purer fame than Hercules acquir'd.
 This hour allows no pause. She leads the king 60
 With Medon, Maron, and Megistias down
 A slope, declining to the mossy verge,
 Which terminates the mountain. While they pass,
 She thus proceeds. These marble masses view,
 Which lie dispers'd around you. They were hewn 65
 From yonder quarry. Note those pond'rous beams,
 The sylvan offspring of that hill. With these
 At my request th'Amphictyons from their seat
 Of gen'ral council piously decreed
 To raise a dome, the ornament of Greece. 70

Observe those wither'd firs, those mould'ring oaks,
 Down that declivity, half-rooted, bent,
 Inviting human force—Then look below.
 There lies Thermopylæ. I see, exclaims
 The high-conceiving hero. I recal 75
 Thy father's words and forecast. He presag'd,
 I should not find his daughter's counsel vain.
 He to accomplish, what thy wisdom plans,
 Hath amplest means supply'd. Go, Medon, bring
 The thousand peasants from th' Oïlean vale 80
 Detach'd. Their leader Melibæus bring.
 Fly, Maron. Ev'ry instrument provide
 To fell the trees, to drag the massy beams,
 To lift the broad-hewn fragments. Are not these
 For sacred use reserv'd? Megistias said. 85
 Can these be wielded by the hand of Mars
 Without pollution? In a solemn tone
 The priestess answer'd. Rev'rend man, who bear'st
 Pontific wreaths, and thou, great captain, hear.
 Forbear to think, that my unprompted mind, 90
 Calm and sequester'd in religion's peace,
 Could have devis'd a stratagem of war;
 Or, unpermitted, could resign to Mars
 These rich materials, gather'd to restore
 In strength and splendour yon decrepid walls, 95
 And that time-shaken-roof Rejecting sleep,
 Last night I lay, contriving swift revenge
 On these Barbarians, whose career profane
 O'eturns the Grecian temples, and devotes
 Their holy bow'rs to flames. I left my couch, 100
 Long

Long ere the sun his orient gates unbarr'd.
Beneath yon beach my pensive head reclin'd.
The rivulets, the fountains, warbling round,
Attracted slumber. In a dream I saw
Calliopé. Her sisters, all with harps, 105
Were rang'd around her; as their Parian forms
Shew in the temple. Dost thou sleep? she said;
Melissa, dost thou sleep? The barb'rous host
Approaches Greece. The first of Grecians comes
By death to vanquish. Priestesses, let him hurl 110
These marble heaps, these consecrated beams,
Our fane itself, to crush the impious ranks.
The hero summon to our sacred hill.
Reveal the promis'd succour. All is due
To liberty against a tyrant's pride. 115
She struck her shell. In concert full reply'd
The sister lyres. Leonidas they sung
In ev'ry note and dialect yet known,
In measures new, in language yet to come.

SHE finish'd. Then Megistias. Dear to heav'n, 120
By nation's honor'd, and in tow'ring thought
O'er either sex pre-eminent, thy words
To me, a soldier and a priest, suffice.
I hesitate no longer. But the king,
Wrapt in ecstatic contemplation stood, 125
Revolving deep an answer, which might suit
His dignity and hers. At length he spake.

Not Lacedæmon's whole collected state
Of senate, people, ephori and kings,
Not the Amphictyons, whose convention holds

The universal majesty of Greece,
 Ere drew such rev'rence; as thy single form,
 O all-surpassing woman, worthy child
 Of time-renown'd Oïleus. In thy voice
 I hear the goddess Liberty. I see 135
 In thy sublimity of look and port
 That daughter bright of Eleutherian Jove.
 Me thou hast prais'd. My conscious spirit feels,
 That not to triumph in thy virtuous praise
 Were want of virtue. Yet, illustrious dame, 140
 Were I assur'd, that oracles delude;
 That, unavailing, I should spill my blood;
 That all the Muses of subjected Greece
 Hereafter would be silent, and my name
 Be ne'er transmitt'd to recording time; 145
 There is in virtue for her sake alone,
 What should uphold my resolution firm.
 My country's laws I never would survive
 Mov'd at his words, reflecting on his fate,
 She had relax'd her dignity of mind, 150
 Had sunk in sadness; but her brother's helm
 Before her beams. Relumining her night,
 He through the cave like Hesperus ascends,
 Th' Oïlean hinds conducting to achieve
 The enterprise, she counsels. Now her ear 155
 Is pierc'd by notes, shrill sounding from the vault.
 Up starts a diff'rent band, alert and light,
 Athenian sailors. Long and sep'rate files
 Of lusty shoulders, eas'd by union, bear
 Thick, well-compacted cables, wont to heave 160
 The

The restiff anchor. To a naval pipe,
As if one soul invigorated all,
And all compos'd one body, they had trod
In equal paces, mazy, yet unbroke
Throughout their passage. So the spinal strength 165
Of some portentous serpent, whom the heats
Of Libya breed, indissolubly knit,
But flexible, a-crofs the sandy plain,
O: up the mountain draws his spotted length,
Or where a winding excavation leads 170
Through rocks abrupt and wild. Of stature large,
In arms, which shew'd simplicity of strength,
No decoration of redundant art,
With sable horse-hair, floating down his back,
A warrior moves behind. Compos'd in gait, 175
Austerely grave and thoughtful, on his shield
The democratic majesty he bore
Of Athens. Carv'd in emblematic brass,
Her image stood with Pallas by her side,
And trampled under each victorious foot 180
A regal crown, one Persian, one usurp'd
By her own tyrants, on the well-fought plain
Of Marathon confounded. He commands
These future guardians of their country's weal,
Of gen'ral Greece the bulwarks. Their high deeds 185
From Artemisium, from th'empurpled shores
Of Salamis renown shall echo wide;
Shall tell posterity in latest times,
That naval fortitude controls the world.
Swift Maron, following, brings a vig'rous band 190
Of

Of Helots. Ev'ry instrument they wield
 To delve, to hew, to heave ; and active last
 Bounds Melibæus, vigilant to urge
 The tardy forward. To Laconia's king
 Advanc'd th' Athenian leader, and began. 195

THOU godlike ruler of Eurotas, hail !
 Thee by my voice Themistocles salutes,
 The admiral of Athens. I conduct
 By public choice the squadron of my tribe,
 And Æschylus am call'd. Our chief hath giv'n 200
 Three days to glory on Eubœa's coast,
 Whose promontories almost rise to meet
 Thy ken from Oeta's cliffs. This morning saw
 The worsted foe, from Artemisium driv'n,
 Leave their disabled ships, and floating wrecks 205
 For Grecian trophies. When the fight was clos'd,
 I was detach'd to bring th' auspicious news,
 To bid thee welcome. Fortunate my keel
 Hath swiftly borne me. Joyful I concur
 In thy attempt. Appris'd by yonder chiefs, 210
 Who met me landing, instant from the ships
 A thousand gallant mariners I drew,
 Who till the setting sun shall lend their toil.

THEMISTOCLES and thou accept my heart,
 Leonidas reply'd, and closely strain'd 215
 The brave, the learn'd Athenian to his breast.
 To envy is ignoble, to admire
 Th' activity of Athens will become
 A king of Sparta, who like thee condemn'd
 His country's sloth. But Sparta now is arm'd. 220
 Thou

T'hōu shalt commend. Behold me station'd here
To watch the wild vicissitudes of war,
Direct the course of slaughter. To this post
By that superior woman I was call'd.
By long protracted fight, left fainting Greece 225
Should yield, outnumber'd, my enlighten'd soul
'Through her, whom heav'n enlightens, hath devis'd
'To whelm the num'rous persevering foe
In hideous death, and signalize the day
With horrors new to war. The Muses prompt 230
The bright achievement. Lo ! from Athens smiles
Minerva too. Her swift, auspicious aid
In thee we find, and these, an ancient race,
By her and Neptune cherish'd. Straight he meets
The gallant train, majestic with his arms 235
Outstretch'd, in this applauding strain he spake.

O LIB'RAL people, earliest arm'd to shield
Not your own Athens more, than gen'ral Greece,
You best deserve her gratitude. Her praise
Will rank you foremost on the rolls of fame. 240

THEY hear, they gaze, revering and rever'd.
Fresh numbers muster, rushing from the hills,
The thickets round. Melissa, pointing, spake.

I AM their leader. Natives of the hills
Are these, the rural worshippers of Pan, 245
Who breathe an ardour through their humble minds
To join you warriors. Vassals these, not mine,
But of the Muses, and their hallow'd laws,
Administer'd by me. Their patient hands
Make culture smile, where nature seems to chide ; 250
Nor

Nor wanting my instructions, or my pray'rs,
 Fertility they scatter by their toil
 Around this aged temple's wild domain.
 Is Melibæus here ? Thou fence secure
 To old Oïleus from the cares of time, 255
 Thrice art thou welcome. Useful, wise, belov'd,
 Where'er thou sojournest, on Oeta known,
 As oft the bounty of a father's love
 Thou on Melissa's solitude dost pour,
 Be thou director of these mountain hinds. 260

Th' important labour to inspiring airs
 From flutes and harps in symphony with hymns
 Of holy virgins, ardent all perform,
 In bands divided under different chiefs.
 Huge timbers, blocks of marble to remove 265
 They first attempted ; then assembled stones
 Loose in their beds, and wither'd trunks, upturn
 By tempests ; next dismember'd from the rock
 Broad, rugged fragments ; from the mountains hew'd
 Their venerable firs, and aged oaks, 270
 Which, of their branches by the light'ning bar'd,
 Presented still against the blasting flame
 Their hoary pride unshaken. These the Greeks,
 But chief th' Athenian mariners, to force
 Uniting skill, with massy leavers heave, 275
 With strong-knit cables drag : till, now dispos'd,
 Where great Leonidas appoints, the piles
 Nod o'er the Streights. This new and sudden scene
 Might lift imagination to belief,
 That Orpheus and Amphion from their beds 280
 Of

Of ever blooming asphodel had heard
The Muses call ; had brought their fabled harps,
At whose mellifluent charm once more the trees
Had burst their fibrous bands, and marbles leap'd
In rapid motion from the quarry's womb, 285
That day to follow harmony in aid
Of gen'rous valour. Fancy might discern
Cerulean Tethys from her coral grot
Emerging, seated on her pearly car,
With Nereids, floating on the surge below, 290
To view in wonder from the Malian bay
The Attic sons of Neptune, who forsook
Their wooden walls to range th'Oëtean crags,
To rend the forests, and disjoin the rocks.

MEANTIME a hundred sheep are slain. Their limbs
From burning piles fume grateful. Bounty spreads 296
A decent board. Simplicity attends.

Then spake the priestess. Long-enduring chiefs,
Your efforts, now accomplish'd, may admit
Refection due to this hard-labour'd train, 300

Due to yourselves. Her hospitable smile
Wins her well-chosen guests, Laconia's king,
Her brother, Maron, Æschylus divine,
With Acarnania's priest. Her first commands
To Melibæus sedulous and blithe,
Distribute plenty through the toiling crowd.

Then, screen'd beneath close umbrage of an oak,
Each care-divested chief the banquet shares.

COOL breezes, whisp'ring, flutter in the leaves,
Whose verdure, pendent in an arch, repel
Vol. II. B The

The west'ring sun's hot glare. Favonius bland
 His breath impregnates with exhaling sweets
 From flow'ry beds, whose scented clusters deck
 The gleaming pool in view. Fast by, a brook
 In limpid lapses over native steps 315

Attunes his cadence to sonorous strings,
 And liquid accents of Melissa's maids.
 The floating air in melody respire.
 A rapture mingles in the calm repast.
 Uprises Æschylus. A goblet full 320

He grasps. To those divinities, who dwell
 In yonder temple, this libation first;
 To thee, benignant hostess, next I pour;
 Then to thy fame, Leonidas. He said.
 His breast, with growing heat distended, prompts 325

His eager hand, to whose expressive sign
 One of the virgins cedes her sacred lyre.
 Their choral song complacency restrains.
 The soul of music, bursting from his touch,
 At once gives birth to sentiment sublime. 330

O HERCULES, and Perseus, he began,
 Star-spangled twins of Leda, and the rest
 Of Jove's immediate seed, your splendid acts
 Mankind protected, while the race was rude;
 While o'er the earth's unciviliz'd extent 335

The savage monster, and the ruffian sway'd,
 More savage still. No policy, nor laws
 Had fram'd societies. By single strength
 A single ruffian, or a monster fell.

The legislator rose. Three lights in Greece, 340
 Lycurgus,

Lycurgus, Solon and Zaleucus blaz'd.

Then, substituting wisdom, Jove profuse
Of his own blood no longer, gave us more
In discipline and manners, which can form
A hero like Leonidas, than all

345

The god-begotten progeny before.

The pupils next of Solon claim the muse.

Sound your hoarse conchs, ye Tritons. You beheld
The Atlantēan shape of slaughter wade
Through your astonish'd deeps, his purple arm
Uplifting high before th'Athenian line.

350

You saw bright conquest, riding on the gale,
Which swell'd their sails; saw terror at their helms
To guide their brazen beaks on Asia's pride.

Her adamantin grapple from their decks
Fate threw, and ruin on the hostile fleet

355

Inextricably fasten'd. Sound, ye nymphs
Of Oeta's mountains, of her woods and streams,
Who hourly witness to Melissa's worth,
Ye Oreads, Dryads, Naiads, sound her praise.
Proclaim Zaleucus by his daughter grac'd
Like Solon and Lycurgus by their sons.

360

LACONIA's hero, and the priestess bow'd

Their foreheads grateful to the bard sublime.

She, rising, takes the word. More sweet thy lyre
To friendship's ear, than terrible to foes

365

Thy spear in battle, though the keenest point,
Which ever pierc'd Barbarians. Close we here
The song and banquet. Hark! a distant din

From Asia's camp requires immediate care.

370

SHE leads. Along the rocky verge they pass.
 In calm delight Leonidas surveys
 All in the order which he last assign'd ;
 As o'er Thermopylæ beneath he cast
 A wary look. The mountain's furthest crag 375
 Now reach'd, Melissa to the king began.

OBSERVE that space below, dispers'd in dales,
 In hollows, winding through d'ssever'd rocks.
 'The slender outlet, skreen'd by yonder shrubs,
 Leads to the pass. There stately to my view 380
 'The martial queen of Caria yester sun,
 Descending shew'd. Her loudly I reprov'd.
 But she, devoted to the Persian king,
 In ambush there preserv'd his flying host.
 She last retreated ; but, retreating, prov'd 385
 Her valour equal to a better cause.
 Again I see the heroine approach.

MEGISTIAS then. I see a powerful arm,
 Sustaining firm the large, emblazon'd shield,
 Which, fashion'd first in Caria, we have learn'd 390
 To imitate in Greece. Sublime her port
 Bespeaks a mighty spirit. Priestess, look.
 An act of piety she now performs,
 Directing those, perhaps her Carian band,
 To bear dead brethren from the bloody field. 395
 Among the horsemen an exalted form
 Like Demaratus strikes my searching eye.
 To me, recalling his transcendent rank
 In Sparta once, he seems a languid fun,
 Which dimly sinks in exhalations dark, 400

Enveloping

Enveloping his radiance. While he spake,
 Intent on martial duty Medon views
 The dang'rous thicket ; Lacedæmon's chief,
 Arcund the region his confid'rate eye
 Extending, marks each movement of the foe. 405

Tu' imperial Persian from his lofty car
 Had in the morning's early conflict seen
 His vanquish'd army, pouring from the streights
 Back to their tents, and o'er his camp dispers'd
 In consternation ; as a river bursts 410
 Impetuous from his fountain, then, enlarg'd,
 Spreads a dead surface o'er some level marsh.
 Th' astonish'd king thrice started from his seat ;
 Shame, fear, and indignation rent his breast,
 As ruin irresistible were near 415
 To overwhelm his millions. Haste, he call'd
 To Hyperanthes, haste and meet the Greeks.
 Their daring rage, their insolence repel.
 From such dishonour vindicate our name.

His royal brother thro' th' extensive camp 420
 Obedient mov'd. Deliberate and brave,
 Each active prince from ev'ry tent remote,
 The hardiest troops he summon'd. Caria's queen,
 To Hyperanthes bound by firm esteem
 Of worth, unrivall'd in the Persian court, 425
 In solemn pace was now returning slow
 Before a band, transporting from the field
 Their slain companions to the sandy beach.

She stopp'd, and thus address'd him. Learn, O prince,
 From one, whose wishes on thy merit wait, 430

The only means to bind thy gallant brow
 In fairest wreaths. To break the Grecian line
 In vain ye struggle, unarray'd and lax,
 Depriv'd of union. Try to form one band
 In order'd ranks, and emulate the foe. 435
 Nor to secure a thicker: next the pass
 Forget. Selected numbers station there.
 Farewel, young hero. May thy fortune prove
 Unlike to mine. Had Asia's millions spar'd
 One myriad to sustain me, none had seen 440
 Me quit the dang'rous contest. But the head
 Of base Argeses on some future day
 Shall feel my treasur'd vengeance. From the fleet
 I only stay, till burial rites are paid
 To these dead Carians. On this fatal strand 445
 May Artemisia's grief appease your ghosts,
 My faithful subjects, sacrific'd in vain.

THE hero grateful and respectful heard,
 What soon his warmth neglected at the sight
 Of spears, which flam'd innumerable round. 450
 Beyond the rest in lustre was a band,
 The satellites of Xerxes. They forsook
 Their constant orbit round th' imperial throne
 At this dread crisis. To a myriad fix'd,
 From their unchanging number they deriv'd 455
 The title of immortals. Light their spears;
 Set in pomegranates of refulgent gold,
 Or burnish'd silver, were the slender blades.
 Magnificent and stately were the ranks.
 The prince, commanding mute attention, spake. 460
 IN

IN two divisions part your number, chiefs,
 One will I lead to onset. In my ranks
 Abrocomes, Hydarnes shall advance,
 Pandates, Mindus, Intaphernes brave,
 To wrest this short-liv'd victory from Greece. 465
 Thou, Abradates, by Ssfarmes join'd,
 Orontes and Mazæus, keep the rest
 From action. Future succour they must lend;
 Should envious fate exhaust our num'rous files.
 For, O pure Mithra, may thy radiant eye 470
 Ne'er see us, yielding to ignoble flight,
 The Persian name dishonour. May the acts
 Of our renown'd progenitors, who, led
 By Cyrus, gave one monarch to the east,
 In us revive. O think, ye Persian lords, 475
 What endless infamy will blast your names,
 Should Greece, that narrow portion of the earth,
 Your pow'r defy: when Babylon hath low'r'd
 Her towring crest, when Lydia's pride is quell'd
 In Cræsus vanquish'd, when her empire lost 480
 Ecbatana deplores. Ye chosen guard,
 Your king's inimortal bulwark, O reflect,
 What deeds from your superior swords he claims.
 You share his largest bounty. To your faith,
 Your constancy and prowess, he commits 485
 His throne, his person, and this day his fame.

THEY wave their banners, blazing in the sun,
 Who then three hours tow'rd Hesperus had driv'n
 From his meridian height. Amid their shouts
 The hoarse-responding billows are not heard. 490

Of

Of different nations, and in different garb,
 Innumerable and vary'd like the shells,
 By restless Terhys scatter'd on the beach,
 O'er which they trod, the multitude advanc'd,
 Straight by Leonidas descry'd. The van 495
 Abrocomes and Hyperanthes led,
 Pandates, Mindus. Violent their march
 Sweeps down the rocky, hollow-sounding pass.
 So, where th' unequal globe in mountains swells,
 A torrent rolls his thund'ring surge between 500
 The steep-erected cliffs; tumultuous dash
 The waters, bursting on the pointed crags:
 The valley roars; the marble channel foams.
 Th' undaunted Greeks immoveably withstand
 The dire encounter. Soon th' impetuous shock 505
 Of thousands and of myriads shakes the ground.
 Stupendous scene of terror! Under hills,
 Whose sides, half-arching, o'er the hosts project,
 The unabating fortitude of Greece
 Maintains her line, th' untrain'd Barbarians charge 510
 In savage fury. With inverted trunks,
 Or bent obliquely from the shagged ridge,
 The sylvan horrors overshadow the fight.
 The clanging trump, the crash of mingled spears,
 The groan of death, and war's discordant shouts 515
 Alarm the echoes in their neighb'ring caves;
 Woods, cliffs, and shores return the dreadful sound.

THE END OF THE SEVENTH BOOK.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Hyperanthes, discontinuing the fight, while he waits for reinforcements, Teribazus, a Persian remarkable for his merit and learning, and highly beloved by Hyperanthes, but unhappy in his passion for Ariana, a daughter of Darius, advances from the rest of the army to the rescue of a friend in distress, who lay wounded on the field of battle. Teribazus is attacked by Diophantus the Mantinian, whom he overcomes; then engaging with Dithyrampus, is himself slain. Hyperanthes hastens to his succour. A general battle ensues, where Diomedon distinguishes his valour. Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, partly by their own efforts, and partly by the perfidy of the Thebans, who desert the line, being on the point of forcing the Grecians, are repulsed by the Lacedæmonians. Hyperanthes composes a select body out of the Persian standing forces, and, making an improvement in their discipline, renews the attack; upon which Leonidas changes the disposition of his army: Hyperanthes and the ablest Persian generals are driven out of the field, and several thousands of the Barbarians, circumvented in the pass, are intirely destroyed.

AMID the van of Persia was a youth,
Nam'd Teribazus, not for golden stores,
Not for wide pastures, travers'd o'er by herds,
By fleece-abounding sheep, or gen'rous steeds,
Nor yet for pow'r, nor splendid honours fam'd.

Rich was his mind in ev'ry art divine ;
 Through ev'ry path of science had he walk'd,
 The votary of wisdom. In the years,
 When tender down invests the ruddy cheek,
 He with the Magi turn'd the hallow'd page 10
 Of Zoroastres. Then his tow'ring thoughts
 High on the plumes of contemplation soar'd.
 He from the lofty Babylonian fane
 With learn'd Chaldeans trac'd the heav'nly sphere,
 There number'd o'er the vivid fires, which gleam 15
 On night's bespangled bosom. Nor unheard
 Were Indian sages from sequester'd bow'rs,
 While on the banks of Ganges they disclos'd
 The pow'rs of nature, whether in the woods,
 The fruitful glebe, or flow'r, the healing plant, 20
 The limpid waters, or the ambient air,
 Or in the purer element of fire.
 The realm of old Sesostris next he view'd,
 Mysterious Ægypt with her hidden rites
 Of Isis and Osiris. Last he fought 25
 Th' Ionian Greeks, from Athens sprung, nor pass'd
 Miletus by, which once in rapture heard
 The tongue of Thales, nor Priene's walls,
 Where wisdom dwelt with Bias, nor the seat
 Of Pittacus, rever'd on Lesbian shores. 30

TH' enlighten'd youth to Susa now return'd,
 Place of his birth. His merit soon was dear
 To Hyperanthes. It was now the time,
 That discontent and murmur on the banks
 Of Nile were loud and threat'ning. Chembes there 35
 The

The only faithful stood, a potent lord,
Whom Xerxes held by promis'd nuptial ties
With his own blood. To this Ægyptian prince
Bright Ariana was the destin'd spouse,
From the same bed with Hyperanthes born. 40
Among her guards was Teribazus nam'd
By that fond brother, tender of her weal.

TH' Ægyptian boundaries they gain. They hear
Of insurrection, of the Pharian tribes
In arms, and Chembes in the tumult slain, 45
They pitch their tents, at midnight are assail'd,
Surpris'd, their leaders massacred, the slaves
Of Ariana captives borne away,
Her own pavilion forc'd, her person seiz'd
By ruffian hands: when timely to redeem 50
Her and th' invaded camp from further spoil
Flies Teribazus with a rally'd band,
Swift on her chariot seats the royal fair,
Nor waits the dawn. Of all her menial train
None but three female slaves are left. Her guide, 55
Her comforter and guardian fate provides
In him, distinguish'd by his worth alone,
No prince, nor satrap, now the single chief
Of her surviving guard. Of regal birth,
But with excelling graces in her soul, 60
Unlike an eastern princess she inclines
To his consoling, his instructive tongue
An humbled ear. Amid the converse sweet
Her charms, her mind, her virtues he explores,
Admiring. Soon is admiration chang'd 65
To

To love ; nor loves he sooner, than despairs.
 From morn till ev'n her passing wheels he guards
 Back to Euphrates. Often, as she mounts,
 Or quits the car, his arm her weight sustains
 With trembling pleasure. His assiduous hand 70
 From purest fountains wafts the living flood.
 Nor seldom by the fair one's soft command
 Would he repose him, at her feet reclin'd ;
 While o'er his lips her lovely forehead bow'd,
 Won by his grateful eloquence, which sooth'd 75
 With sweet variety the tedious march,
 Beguiling time. He too would then forget
 His pains awhile, in raptures vain entranc'd,
 Delusion all, and fleeting rays of joy,
 Soon overcast by more intense despair ; 80
 Like wintry clouds, which, op'ning for a time,
 Tinge their black folds with gleams of scatter'd light,
 Then, swiftly closing, on the brow of morn
 Condense their horrors, and in thickest gloom
 The ruddy beauty veil. They now approach 85
 The tow'r of Belus. Hyperanthes leads
 Through Babylon an army to chastise
 The crime of Ægypt. Teribazus here
 Parts from his princess, marches bright in steel
 Beneath his patron's banner, gathers palms 90
 On conquer'd Nile. To Susa he returns,
 To Ariana's residence, and bears
 Deep in his heart th' immedicable wound.
 But unreveal'd and silent was his pain ;
 Nor yet in solitary shades he roam'd, 95
 Nor

Nor shunn'd resort : but o'er his sorrows cast
 A sickly dawn of gladness, and in smiles
 Conceal'd his anguish ; while the secret flame
 Rag'd in his bosom, and its peace consum'd :
 His soul still brooding o'er these mournful thoughts. 100

CAN I, O Wisdom, find relief in thee,
 Who dost approve my passion ? From the snares
 Of beauty only thou wouldst guard my heart.
 But here thyself art charm'd ; where softness, grace,
 And every virtue dignify desire. 105

Yet thus to love, despairing to possess,
 Of all the torments, by relentless fate
 On life inflicted, is the most severe.
 Do I not feel thy warnings in my breast,
 'That flight alone can save me ? I will go 110
 Back to the learn'd Chaldeans, on the banks
 Of Ganges seek the sages ; where to heav'n
 With thee my elevated soul shall tow'r.

O wretched Teribazus ! all conspires
 Against thy peace. Our mighty lord prepares 115
 To overwhelm the Grecians. Ev'ry youth
 Is call'd to war ; and I, who lately pois'd
 With no inglorious arm the soldier's lance,
 Who near the side of Hyperanthes fought,
 Must join the throng. How therefore can I fly 120
 From Ariana, who with Asia's queens
 The splendid camp of Xerxes must adorn ?

Then be it so. Again I will adore
 Her gentle virtues. Her delightful voice,
 Her gracious sweetness shall again diffuse 125

Resiftless magic through my ravish'd heart ;
 Till passion, thus with double rage enflam'd,
 Swells to distraction in my tortur'd breast,
 Then—but in vain through darkness do I search
 My fate—Despair and fortune be my guides. 130

THE day arriv'd, when Xerxes first advanc'd
 His arms from Susa's gates. The Persian dames,
 So were accustom'd all the eastern fair,
 In sumptuous cars accompany'd his march,
 A beauteous train, by Ariana grac'd. 135

Her Teribazus follows, on her wheels
 Attends and pines. Such woes oppress the youth,
 Oppress, but not enervate. From the van
 He in this second conflict had withstood
 The threat'ning frown of adamant'ine Mars, 140
 He singly, while his bravest friends recoil'd,
 His manly temples no tiara bound.

The slender lance of Asa he disdain'd,
 And her light target. Eminent he tow'r'd
 In Grecian arms the wonder of his foes ; 145

Among th' Ionians were his strenuous limbs
 Train'd in the gymnic school. A fulgent casque
 Inclos'd his head. Before his face and chest
 Down to the knees an ample shield was spread.

A pond'rous spear he shook. The well-aim'd point 150
 Sent two Phliasians to the realms of death,
 With four Tegyrians, whose indignant chief,
 Brave Hegesander, vengeance breath'd in vain,
 With streaming wounds repuls'd. Thus far unmatch'd,

His arm prevail'd ; when Hyperanthes call'd 155

From

From fight his fainting legions. Now each band
Their languid courage reforc'd by rest:
Mean time with Teribazus thus conferr'd
Th' applauding prince. Thou much deserving youth,
Had twenty warriors in the dang'rous van 160
Like thee maintain'd the onset, Greece had wept
Her prostrate ranks. The weary'd fight awhile
I now relax, till Abradates strong,
Orontes and Mazæus are advanc'd.
Then to the conflict will I give no pause. 165
If not by prowess, yet by endless toil
Successive numbers shall exhaust the foe.
He said. Immers'd in sadness, scarce reply'd,
But to himself complain'd the am'rous youth.

STILL do I languish, mourning o'er the fame, 170
My arm acquires. Tormented heart! thou seat
Of constant sorrow, what deceitful smiles
Yet canst thou borrow from unreal hope
To flatter life? at Ariana's feet
What if with supplicating knees I bow, 175
Implore her pity, and reveal my love.
Wretch! canst thou climb to yon effulgent orb,
And share the splendors, which irradiate heav'n?
Dost thou aspire to that exalted maid,
Great Xerxes' sister, rivalling the claim 180
Of Asia's proudest potentates and kings?
Unless within her bosom I inspir'd
A passion fervent, as my own, nay more,
Such, as dispelling ev'ry virgin fear,
Might, unrestrain'd, disclose its fond desire, 185

My love is hopeless ; and her willing hand,
 Should she bestow it, draws from Asia's lord
 On both perdition. By despair benumb'd,
 His limbs their action lose. A wish for death
 O'ercasts and chills his soul. When sudden cries 190
 From Ariannes rouse his drooping pow'rs.
 Alike in manners they of equal age
 Were friends, and partners in the glorious toil
 Of war. Together they victorious chae'd
 The bleeding sons of Nile, when Ægypt's pride 195
 Before the sword of Hyperanthes fell.
 'That lov'd companion Teribazus views
 By all abandon'd, in his gore outstretch'd
 'The victor's spoil. His languid spirit starts ;
 He rushes a-dent from the Persian line ; 200
 'The wounded warrior in his strong embrace
 He bears away. By indignation stung,
 Fierce from the Grecians Diophantus sends
 A loud defiance. Teribazus leaves
 His rescu'd friend. His manly shield he rears ; 205
 High brandishing his formidable spear,
 He turns intrepid on th' approaching foe.
 Amazement follows. On he strides, and shakes
 'The plumed honours of his shining crest.
 'Th' ill-fated Greek awaits th' unequal fight, 210
 Pierc'd in the throat, with sounding arms he falls.
 'Through ev'ry file the Mantineans mourn.
 Long on the skin the victor fix'd his sight
 With these reflections. By thy splendid arms
 Thou art a Greek of no ignoble rank. 215
 From

From thy ill fortune I perhaps derive
 A more conspicuous lustre—What if heav'n
 Should add new victims, such as thou, to grace
 My undeserving hand? Who knows, but she
 Might smile upon my trophies. Oh! vain thought! 220
 I see the pride of Asia's monarch swell
 With vengeance fatal to her beauteous head.
 Disperse, ye phantom hopes. Too long, torn heart,
 Hast thou with grief contended. Lo! I plant
 My foot this moment on the verge of death, 225
 By fame invited, by despair impell'd
 To pass th' irremeable bound. No more
 Shall Teribazus backward turn his step,
 But here conclude his doom. Then cease to heave,
 Thou troubled bosom, ev'ry thought be calm 230
 Now at th' approach of everlasting peace.

He ended; when a mighty foe drew nigh,
 Not less than Dithyrambus. Ere they join'd,
 The Persian warrior to the Greek began.

Art thou th' unconquerable chief, who now'd 235
 Our battle down? That eagle on thy shield
 Too well proclaims thee. To attempt thy force
 I rashly purpos'd. That my single arm
 Thou deign'st to meet, accept my thanks, and know,
 The thought of conquest less employs my soul, 240
 Than admiration of thy glorious deeds,
 And that by thee I cannot fall disgrac'd.

He ceas'd. These words the Thespian youth return'd.
 Of all the praises from thy gen'rous mouth
 The only portion my desert may claim, 245

Is this my bold adventure to confront
 Thee yet unmatched. What Grecian hath not mark'd
 Thy flaming steel? From Asia's boundless camp
 Not one hath equall'd thy victorious might.
 But whence thy armour of the Grecian form? 250
 Whence thy tall spear, thy helmet? Whence the weight
 Of that strong shield? Unlike thy eastern friends,
 O if thou be'st some fugitive, who, lost
 To liberty and virtue, art become
 A tyrant's vile stipendiary, that arm, 255
 That valour thus triumphant I deplore,
 Which after all their efforts and success
 Deserve no honour from the gods, or men.

HERE Teribazus in a sigh rejoin'd.

I am to Greece a stranger, am a wretch 260
 'To thee unknown, who courts this hour to die,
 Yet not ignobly, but in death to raise
 My name from darkness, while I end my woes.

THE Grecian then. I view thee, and I mourn.

A dignity, which virtue only bears, 265
 Firm resolution, seated on thy brow,
 Though grief hath dimm'd thy drooping eye, demand
 My veneration: and, whatever be
 The malice of thy fortune, what the cares,
 Infesting thus thy quiet, they create 270
 Within my breast the pity of a friend.
 Why then, constraining my reluctant hand
 To act against thee, will thy might support
 Th' unjust ambition of malignant kings,
 The foes to virtue, liberty, and peace? 275
 Yet

Yet free from rage or enmity I lift
My adverse weapon. Victory I ask.
Thy life may fate for happier days reserve.

THIS said, their beaming lances they protend,
Of hostile hate or fury both devoid, 280

As on the Isthmian or Olympic sands
For fame alone contending. Either host,
Pois'd on their arms, in silent wonder gaze.
The fight commences. Soon the Grecian spear,
Which, all the day in constant battle worn, 285

Unnumber'd shields and corselets had transfix'd,
Against the Persian buckler, shiv'ring, breaks,
Its master's hand disarming. Then began
The sense of honour, and the dread of shame
To swell in Dithyrambus. Undismay'd, 290

He grappled with his foe, and instant seiz'd
His threat'ning spear, before th' uplifted arm
Could execute the meditated wound.

The weapon burst between their struggling grasp.
Their hold they loosen, bare their shining swords. 295
With equal swiftness to defend or charge,
Each active youth advances and recedes.

On ev'ry side they traverse. Now direct,
Obliquely now the wheeling blades descend.
Still is the conflict dubious ; when the Greek, 300

Dissembling, points his faulchion to the ground,
His arm depressing, as o'ercome by toil :
While with his buckler cautious he repels
The blows, repeated by his active foe.

Greece trembles for her hero. Joy pervades 305
The

The ranks of Asia ; Hyperanthes strides
 Before the line, preparing to receive.
 His friend triumphant : while the wary Greek
 Calm and defensive bears th' assault. At last,
 As by th' incautious fury of his strokes, 310
 The Persian swung his cov'ring shield aside,
 The fatal moment Dithyrambus seiz'd.
 Light darting forward with his feet outstretch'd,
 Between th' unguarded ribs he plung'd his steel.
 Affection, grief and terror wing the speed 315
 Of Hyperanthes. From his bleeding foe
 The Greek retires, not distant, and awaits
 The Persian prince. But he with watry cheeks
 In speechless anguish clasps his dying friend ;
 From whose cold lip with interrupted phrase 320
 These accents break. O dearest, best of men !
 Ten thousand thoughts of gratitude and love
 Are struggling in my heart—O'erpow'ring fate
 Denies my voice the utterance—O my friend !
 O Hyperanthes ! Hear my tongue unfold 325
 What, had I liv'd, thou never should'st have known.
 I lov'd thy sister. With despair I lov'd.
 Soliciting this honourable doom,
 Without regret in Persia's fight and thine
 I fall. Th' inexorable hand of fate 330
 Weighs down his eye-lids, and the gloom of death
 His fleeting light eternally o'ershades.
 Him on Choaspe, o'er the blooming verge,
 A frantic mother shall bewail ; shall strew
 Her silver tresses in the crystal wave: 335
 While:

While all the shores re-echo to the name
Of Teribazus lost. Th' afflicted prince,
Contemplating in tears the pallid corse,
Vents in these words the bitterness of grief.

OH! Teribazus! Oh! my friend, whose loss 340
I will deplore for ever. Oh! what pow'r,
By me, by thee offended, clos'd thy breast
To Hyperanthes in distrust unkind!
She should, she must have lov'd thee—Now no more
Thy placid virtues, thy instructive tongue 345
Shall drop their sweetness on my secret hours.
But in complaints doth friendship waste the time,
Which to immediate vengeance should be giv'n?

HE ended, rushing furious on the Greek;
Who, while his gallant enemy expir'd, 350
While Hyperanthes tenderly receiv'd
The last embraces of his gasping friend,
Stood nigh, reclin'd in saucers on his shield,
And in the pride of victory repin'd.
Unmark'd, his foe approach'd. But forward sprung 355
Diomedon. Before the Thespian youth
Aloft he rais'd his targe, and loudly thus.

HOLD thee, Barbarian, from a life more worth,
Than thou and Xerxes with his host of slaves.

HIS words he seconds with his rapid lance. 360
Soon a tremendous conflict had ensu'd;
But Intaphernes, Mindus, and a croud
Of Persian lords, advancing, fill the space
Betwixt th' encount'ring chiefs. In mutual wrath,
With fruitless efforts they attempt the fight. 365
So

So rage two buils along th' opposing banks
 Of some deep flood, which parts the fruitful mead.
 Defiance thunders from their angry mouths
 In vain : in vain the furrow'd sod they rend ;
 Wide rolls the stream, and intercepts the war. 370

As by malignant fortune if a drop
 Of moisture mingles with the burning mass
 Of liquid metal, instant show'rs of death
 On ev'ry side th' exploding ruin spreads ;
 So disappointment irritates the flame 375
 Of fierce Platæa's chief, whose vengeance bursts
 In wide destruction. Embas, Daucus fall,
 Arsæus, Ochus, Mendes, Artias die ;
 And ten most hardy of th' immortal guard,
 To shivers breaking on the Grecian shield 380
 Their gold-embellish'd weapons, raise a mound
 O'er thy pale body, O in prime destroy'd,
 Of Asia's garden once the fairest plant,
 Fall'n Teribazus ! Thy distracted friend
 From this thy temporary tomb is dragg'd 385
 By forceful zeal of satraps to the shore ;
 Where then the brave Abrocomes arrang'd
 The succours new, by Abradates brought,
 Orontes and Mazæus. Turning swift,
 Abrocomes, inform'd his brother thus. 390

STRONG reinforcement from th' immortal guard
 Pandates bold to Intaphernes leads,
 In charge to harraßs by perpetual toil
 Those Grecians next the mountain. Thou unite
 To me thy valour. Here the hostile ranks 395
 Lefs

Less stable seem. Our joint impression try;
 Let all the weight of battle here impend.
 Rouse, Hyperanthes. Give regret to winds.
 Who hath not lost a friend this direful day?
 Let not our private cares assist the Greeks
 Too strong already; or let sorrow act:
 Mourn and revenge. These animating words
 Send Hyperanthes to the foremost line.
 His vengeful ardor leads. The battle joins.

400

Who stemm'd this tide of onset? Who imbru'd
 His shining spear the first in Persian blood?
 Eupalamus. Artembares he slew
 With Derdas fierce, whom Caucasus had rear'd
 On his tempestuous brow, the savage sons
 Of violence and rapine. But their doom
 Fires Hyperanthes, whose vindictive blade
 Arrests the victor in his haughty course.
 Beneath the strong Abrocomes o'erwhelm'd,
 Melissus swells the number of the dead.
 None could Mycenæ boast of prouder birth,
 Than young Melissus, who in silver mail
 The line embellish'd. He in Cirrha's mead,
 Where high Parnassus from his double top
 O'er shades the Pythian games, the envy'd prize
 Of fame obtain'd. Low sinks his laurell'd head
 In death's cold night; and horrid gore deforms
 The graceful hair. Impatient to revenge
 Aristobulus strides before the van.

410

415

420

A storm of fury darkens all his brow.
 Around he rolls his gloomy eye. For death

425

Is Alyattes mark'd, of regal blood,
 Deriv'd from Cræsus, once imperial lord
 Of nations. Him the nymphs of Halys wept ;
 When, with delusive oracles beguil'd
 By Delphi's god, he pass'd their fatal waves 430
 A mighty empire to dissolve : nor knew
 Th' ill-destin'd prince, that envious fortune watch'd
 That direful moment from his hand to wrest
 The sceptre of his fathers. In the shade
 Of humble life his race on Tmolus' brow 435
 Lay hid ; till, rous'd to battle, on this field
 Sinks Alyattes, and a royal breed
 In him extinct for ever. Lycis dies,
 For boist'rous war ill-chosen. He was skill'd
 To tune the lulling flute, and melt the heart ; 440
 Or with his pipe's awak'ning strain allure
 The lovely dames of Lydia to the dance.
 They on the verdant level graceful mov'd
 In vary'd measures ; while the cooling breeze
 Beneath their swelling garments wanton'd o'er 445
 Their snowy breasts, and smooth Cayster's stream,
 Soft-gliding, murmur'd by. The hostile blade
 Draws forth his entrails. Prone he falls. Not long
 The victor triumphs. From the prostrate corse
 Of Lycis while insulting he extracts 450
 The reeking weapon, Hyperanthes' steel
 Invades his knee, and cuts the sinewy cords.
 The Mycenæans with uplifted shields,
 Corinthians and Phliæans close around
 The wounded chieftain. In redoubled rage 455
 The

The contest glows. Abrocomes incites
 Each noble Persian. Each his voice obeys.
 Here Abradates, there Mazæus pres,

Orontes and Hydarnes. None retire
 From toil or peril. Uig'd on ev'ry side, 460
 Mycenæ's band to fortune leave their chief.
 Despairing, raging, destitute he stands,
 Propt on his spear. His wounds forbid retreat.
 None but his brother, Eunenes, abides

The dire extremity. His studded orb 465
 Is held defensive. On his arm the sword
 Of Hyperanthes rapidly descends.
 Down drops the buckler, and the sever'd hand
 Relinquishes its hold. The unprotected pair
 By Asia's hero to the ground are swept ; 470
 As to a reaper crimson poppies low'r
 Their heads luxuriant on the yellow plain.
 From both their breasts the vital currents flow,
 And mix their streams. Elate the Persians pour
 Their numbers, deep'ning on the foe dismay'd. 475
 The Greeks their station painfully maintain.
 This Anaxander saw, whose faithless tongue
 His colleague Leontiades bespake.

THE hour is come to serve our Persian friends.
 Behold, the Greeks are press'd. Let Thebes retire, 480
 A bloodless conquest yielding to the king.

THIS said, he drew his Thebans from their post,
 Not with unpunish'd treachery. The lance
 Of Abradates gor'd their foul retreat ;
 Nor knew the Asian chief that Asia's friends 485

Before him bled. Mean time, as mighty Jove,
 Or he more ancient on the throne of heav'n,
 When from the womb of Chaos dark the world
 Emerg'd to birth, where'er he view'd the jar
 Of atoms yet discordant and unform'd, 490
 Confusion thence with pow'rful voice dispell'd,
 Till light and order universal reign'd ;
 So from the hill Leonidas survey'd
 The various war. He saw the Theban rout ;
 That Corinth, Phlius and Mycenæ look'd 495
 Affrighted backward. Instantly his charge
 Is borne by Maron, whom obedience wings,
 Precipitating down the sacred cave,
 That Sparta's ranks, advancing, should repair
 The disunited phalanx. Ere they move, 500
 Dienece's inspires them. Fame, my friends,
 Calls forth your valour in a signal hour.
 For you this glorious crisis she reserv'd
 Laconia's splendor to assert. Young man,
 Son of Megistias, follow. He conducts 505
 Th'experienc'd troop. They lock their shields, and wedg'd
 In dense arrangement, repossess the void
 Left by the faithless Thebans, and repulse
 Th'exulting Persians. When with efforts vain
 These oft renew'd the contest, and recoil'd, 510
 As oft confounded with diminish'd ranks ;
 Lo ! Hyperanthes blush'd, repeating late
 The words of Artemisia. Learn, O chiefs,
 The only means of glory and success.
 Unlike the others, whom we newly chac'd, 515
 These

These are a band, selected from the Greeks,
 Perhaps the Spartans, whom we often hear
 By Demaratus prais'd. To break their line
 In vain we struggle, unarray'd and lax,
 Depriv'd of union. Do not we preside
 O'er Asia's armies, and our courage boast,
 Our martial art above the vulgar herd?
 Let us, ye chiefs, attempt in order'd ranks
 To form a troop, and emulate the foe.

520

THEY wait not dubious. On the Malian shore
 In gloomy depth a column soon is form'd
 Of all the nobles, Abradates strong,
 Orontes bold, Mazæus, and the might
 Of brave Abrocomes with each, who bore
 The highest honours, and excell'd in arms;
 Themselves the lords of nations, who before
 The throne of Xerxes tributary bow'd.
 To these succeed a chosen number, drawn
 From Asia's legions, vaunted most in fight;
 Who from their king perpetual stipends share;
 Who, station'd round the provinces, by force
 His tyranny uphold. In ev'ry part
 Is Hyperanthes active, ardent seen
 Throughout the huge battalion. He adjusts
 Their equal range, then cautious, left on march
 Their unaccustom'd order should relax,
 Full in the center of the foremost rank
 Orontes plants, committing to his hand
 Th' imperial standard; whose expanded folds
 Glow'd in the air, presenting to the sun

525

530

535

540

545

The richest dye of Tyre. The royal bird
 Amid the gorgeous tincture shone express'd
 In high-embroider'd gold. The wary prince
 On this conspicuous, leading sign of war
 Commands each satrap, posted in the van, 550
 To fix his eye regardful, to direct
 By this alone his even pace and flow,
 Retiring or advancing. So the star,
 Chief of the spangles on the fancy'd bear,
 Once an Idæan nymph, and nurse of Jove, 555
 Bright Cynosura to the Boreal pole
 Attracts the sailor's eye : when distance hides
 The headland signals, and her guiding ray,
 New-ris'n, she throws. The hero next appoints,
 That ev'ry warrior through the length'ning files, 560
 Observing none, but those before him plac'd,
 Shall watch their motions, and their steps pursue.
 Nor is th' important thicket next the pass
 Forgot. Two thousand of th' immortal guard
 That station seize. His orders all perform'd, 565
 Close by the standard he assumes his post.
 Intrepid thence he animates his friends.

HEROIC chieftains, whose unconquer'd force
 Rebell'ous Ægypt and the Lybian felt,
 Think, what the splendor of your former deeds 570
 From you exacts. Remember, from the great
 Illustrious actions are a debt to fame.
 No middle path remains for them to tread,
 Whom she hath once ennobled. Lo ! this day
 By trophies new will signalize your names, 575
 Or in dishonour will for ever cloud. He

HE said, and vig'rous all to fight proceed.
 As when tempestuous Eurus stems the weight
 Of western Neptune, struggling through the freights,
 Which bound Alcides' labours, here the storm 580
 With rapid wing reverberates the tide ;
 There the contending surge with furrow'd tops
 To mountains swells, and, whelming o'er the beach
 On either coast, impels the hoary foam
 On Mauritanian and Iberian strands : 585
 Such is the dreadful onset. Persia keeps
 Her foremost ranks unbroken, which are fill'd
 By chosen warriors ; while the num'rous crowd,
 Though still promiscuous pouring from behind,
 Give weight and pressure to th' embattled chiefs, 590
 Despising danger. Like the mural strength
 Of some proud city, bulwark'd round and arm'd
 With rising tow'rs to guard her wealthy stores,
 Immoveable, impenetrable stood
 Laconia's ferry'd phalanx. In their face 595
 Grim tyranny her threat'ning fetters shakes,
 Red havoc grinds insatiable his jaws.
 Greece is behind, entrusting to their swords
 Her laws, her freedom, and the sacred urns
 Of their forefathers. Present now to thought 600
 Their altars rise, the mansions of their birth,
 Whate'er they honour, venerate and love.

BRIGHT in the Persian van th' exalted lance
 Of Hyperanthes flam'd. Beside him press'd
 Abrocomes, Hydarnes, and the bulk 605

Of Abradates terrible in war.

Firm, as a Memphian pyramid, was seen
 Dienece; while Agis close in rank
 With Menalippus, and the added strength
 Of dauntless Maron, their connected shields 610
 Upheld. Each unrelax'd array maintains
 The conflict undecided; nor could Greece
 Repel the adverse numbers, nor the weight
 Of Asia's band select remove the Greeks.

SWIFT from Laconia's king, perceiving soon 615
 The Persian's new arrangement, Medon flew,
 Who thus the flaid Dienece address'd.

LEONIDAS commands the Spartan ranks
 To measure back some paces. Soon, he deems,
 The unexperient'd foes in wild pursuit 620
 Will break their order. Then the charge renew.

THIS heard, the signal of retreat is giv'n.
 The Spartans seem to yield. The Persians stop.
 Astonishment restrains them, and the doubt
 Of unexpected victory. Their sloth 625
 Abrocomes awakens. By the sun
 'They fly before us. My victorious friends,
 Do you delay to enter Greece? Away,
 Rush on intrepid. I already hear.
 Our horse, our chariots thund'ring on her plains. 630
 I see her temples wrapt in Grecian fires.

He spake. In hurry'd violence they roll
 Tumultuous forward. All in headlong pace
 Disjoin their order, and the line dissolve.
 This when the sage Dienece descries, 635
 The

The Spartans halt, returning to the charge
With sudden vigour. In a moment pierc'd
By his resistless steel, Orontes falls,
And quits th' imperial banner. This the chief
In triumph waves. The Spartans press the foe 640
Close-wedg'd and square, in slow, progressive pace,
O'er heaps of mangled carcases and arms
Invincible they tread. Composing flutes
Each thought, each motion harmonize. No rage
Untunes their souls. The phalanx yet more deep 645
Of Medon follows ; while the lighter bands
Glide by the flanks, and reach the broken foe.
Amid their flight what vengeance from the arm
Of Alpheus falls ? O'er all in swift pursuit
Was he renown'd. His active feet had match'd 650
The son of Peleus in the dusty course ;
But now the wrongs, the long-remember'd wrongs
Of Polydorus animate his strength
With ten-fold vigour. Like th' empurpled moon,
When in eclipse her silver disk hath lost 655
The wonted light, his buckler's polish'd face
Is now obscur'd ; the figur'd bosses drop
In crimson, spouting from his deathful strokes.
As, when with horror wing'd, a whirlwind rends
A shatter'd navy ; from the ocean cast, 660
Enormous fragments hide the level beach ;
Such as dejected Persia late beheld
On Thessaly's unnavigable strand :
Thus o'er the champain satraps lay bestrewn
By Alpheus, persevering in pursuit 665
Beyond

Beyond the pass. Not Phœbus could inflict
 On Niobè more vengeance, when, incens'd
 By her maternal arrogance, which scorn'd
 Latona's race, he twang'd his ireful bow,
 And one by one from youth and beauty hurl'd 670
 Her sons to Pluto ; nor severer pangs
 That mother felt, than pierc'd the gen'rous soul
 Of Hyf'eranthes, while his noblest friends
 On ev'ry side lay gasping. With despair
 He still contends. Th' immortals from their stand 675
 Behind th' entangling thicker next the pass
 His signal rouses. Ere they clear their way,
 Well-caution'd Medon from the close defile
 Two thousand Locrians pours. An aspect new
 The fight assumes. Through implicated shrubs 680
 Confusion waves each banner. Faulchions, spears,
 And shields are all encumber'd ; till the Greeks
 Had forc'd a passage to the yielding foe.
 Then Medon's arm is felt. The dreadful boar,
 Wide-wasting once the Calydonian fields, 685
 In fury breaking from his gloomy lair,
 Rang'd with less havoc through unguarded folds,
 Than Medon, sweeping down the glitt'ring files,
 So vainly styl'd immortal. From the cliff
 Divine Melissa, and Laconia's king 690
 Enjoy the glories of Oileus' son.
 Fierce Alpheus too, returning from his chase,
 Joins in the slaughter. Ev'ry Persian falls.
 To him the Locrian chief. Brave Spartan, thanks.
 Through thee my purpose is accomplish'd full. 695
 My.

My phalanx here with levell'd rows of spears
 Shall guard the shatter'd bushes. Come what may
 From Asia's camp, th' assailant, flank'd and driv'n
 Down yonder slope, shall perish. Gods of Greece,
 You shall behold your fanes profusely deck'd 700
 In splendid off'rings from Barbarian spoils,
 Won by your free-born supplicants this day.

THIS said, he forms his ranks. Their threat'ning points
 Gleam through the thicket, whence the shiv'ring foes
 Avert their sight, like passengers dismay'd, 705
 Who on their course by Nile's portentous banks
 Descry in ambush of perfidious reeds
 The crocodile's fell teeth. Contiguous lay
 Thermopylæ. Dieneces secur'd
 The narrow mouth. Two lines the Spartans shew'd 710
 One tow'rd the plain observ'd the Persian camp;
 One, led by Agis, fac'd th' interior pass.

NOT yet discourag'd, Hyperanthes strives
 The scatter'd host to rally. He exhorts,
 Entreats, at length indignant thus exclaims. 715

DEGEN'RATE Persians! to sepulchral dust
 Could breath return, your fathers from the tomb
 Would utter groans. Inglorious, do you leave
 Behind you Persia's standard to adorn
 Some Grecian temple? Can your splendid cars, 720
 Voluptuous couches, and delicious boards,
 Your gold, your gems, ye satraps, be preserv'd
 By cowardice, and flight? The eunuch slave
 Will scorn such lords, your women loath your beds.

Few hear him, fewer follow; while the fight 725
 His unabating courage oft renews,
 As oft repuls'd with danger: till, by all
 Deserted, mixing in the gen'ral rout,
 He yields to fortune, and regains the camp.
 In short advances thus the dying tide 730
 Beats for a while against the shelving strand,
 Still by degrees retiring, and at last
 Within the bosom of the main subsides.

Though Hyperanthes from the fight was driv'n
 Close to the mountain, whose indented side 735
 There gave the widen'd pass an ample space
 For numbers to embattle, still his post
 Bold Intaphernes underneath a cliff
 Against the firm Platæan line maintain'd.
 On him look'd down Leonidas like death, 740
 When from his iron cavern call'd by Jove,
 He stands gigantic on a mountain's head,
 Whence he commands th' affrighted earth to quake,
 And, crags and forests in his direful grasp
 High-wielding, dashes on a town below, 745
 Whose deeds of black impiety provcke
 The long-enduring gods. Around the verge
 Of Oeta, curving to a crescent's shape,
 The marbles, timbers, fragments lay amass'd.
 The Helots, peasants, mariners attend 750
 In order nigh Leonidas. They watch
 His look. He gives the signal. Rous'd at once
 The force, the skill, activity and zeal

Of thousands are combin'd. Down rush the piles.
 Trees, roll'd on trees, with mingled rock descend, 755
 Unintermitted ruin. Loud resound
 The hollow trunks against the mountain's side.
 Swift bounds each craggy mass. The foes below
 Look up aghast, in horror shrink and die.
 Whole troops, o'erwhelm'd beneath th' enormous load,
 Lie hid and lost, as never they had known 761
 A name or being. Intaphernes clad
 In regal-splendor, progeny of kings,
 Who rul'd Damascus, and the Syrian palms, '
 Here slept for ever. Thousands of his train 765
 In that broad space the ruins had not reach'd.
 Back to their camp a passage they attempt
 Through Lacedæmon's line. Them Agis stopp'd.
 Before his powerful arm Pandates fell.
 Sofarnes, Tachos. Menalippus dy'd 770
 His youthful steel in blood. The mightier spear
 Of Maron pierc'd battalions, and enlarg'd
 The track of slaughter. Backward turn'd the rout,
 Nor found a milder fate. Th' unwearied swords
 Of Dithyrambus and Diomedon, 775
 Who from the hill are wheeling on their flank,
 Still flash tremendous. To the shore they fly,
 At once envelop'd by successive bands
 Of diff'rent Grecians. From the gulph profound
 Perdition here inevitable frowns, 780
 While there, encircled by a grove of spears,
 They stand devoted hecatombs to Mars.

Now

Now not a moment's interval delays
Their gen'ral doom ; but down the Malian steep
Prone are they hurry'd to th' expanded arms 785
Of horror, rising from the oozy deep,
And grasping all their numbers, as they fall.
The dire confusion like a storm invades
The chafing furge. Whole troops Bellona rolls
In one vast ruin from the craggy ridge. 790
O'er all their arms, their ensigns, deep-engulph'd,
With hideous roar the waves for ever close.

THE END OF THE EIGHTH BOOK.

B O O K

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE NINTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Night coming on, the Grecians retire to their tents. A guard is placed on the Phocian wall under the command of Agis. He admits into the camp a lady, accompanied by a single slave, and conducts them to Leonidas; when she discovers herself to be Ariana, sister of Xerxes and Hyperanthes, and sues for the body of Teribazus; which being found among the slain, she kills herself upon it. The slave who attended her proves to be Polydorus, brother to Alpheus and Maron, and who had been formerly carried into captivity by a Phœnician pirate. He relates, before an assembly of the chiefs, a message from Demaratus to the Spartans, which discloses the treachery of the Thebans, and of Epialtes the Malian, who had undertaken to lead part of the Persian army through a pass among the mountains of Oeta. This information throws the council into a great tumult, which is pacified by Leonidas, who sends Alpheus to observe the motions of these Persians, and Dieneces with a party of Lacedæmonians to support the Phocians, with whom the defence of these passages in the hills had been intrusted. In the mean time Agis sends the bodies of Teribazus and Ariana to the camp of Xerxes.

IN sable vesture, spangled o'er with stars,
 The night assum'd her throne. Rec all'd from war,
 Their toil, protracted long, the Greeks forget,
 Dissolv'd in silent slumber, all, but those,
 Who watch th' uncertain perils of the dark, 5
 A hundred warriors. Agis was their chief.
 High on the wall intent the hero sat.
 Fresh winds across the undulating bay
 From Asia's host the various din convey'd
 In one deep murmur, swelling on his ear. 10
 When by the sound of footsteps down the pass
 Alarm'd, he calls aloud. What feet are these,
 Which beat the echoing pavement of the rock?
 Reply, nor tempt inevitable fate?

A VOICE reply'd. No enemies we come, 15
 But crave admittance in an humble tone.

THE Spartan answers. Through the midnight shade
 What purpose draws your wand'ring steps abroad?

To whom the stranger. We are friends to Greece.
 Through thy assistance we implore access 20
 To Lacedæmon's king. The cautious Greek
 Still hesitates; when musically sweet
 A tender voice his wond'ring ear allures.

O GEN'ROUS warrior, listen to the pray'r
 Of one distress'd, whom grief alone hath led 25
 Through midnight shades to these victorious tents,
 A wretched woman, innocent of fraud.*

THE chief, descending, thro' th' unfolded gates
 Upheld a flaming torch. The light disclos'd
 One first in servile garments. Near his side 30

A woman

A woman graceful and majestic stood,
 Not with an aspect rivalling the pow'r
 Of fatal Helen, or th' insnaring charms
 Of love's soft queen, but such as far surpass'd
 Whate'er the lilly, blending with the rose, 35
 Spreads on the cheek of beauty soon to fade ;
 Such as express'd a mind by wisdom rul'd,
 By sweetness temper'd ; virtue's purest light
 Illumining the countenance divine :
 Yet could not soften rig'rous fate, nor charm 40
 Malignant fortune to revere the good ;
 Which oft with anguish rends a spotless heart,
 And oft associates wisdom with despair.
 In courteous phrase began the chief humane.

EXALTED fair, whose form adorns the night, 45
 Forbear to blame the vigilance of war.
 My slow compliance to the rigid laws
 Of Mars impute. In me no longer pause
 Shall ~~from~~ the presence of our king withhold
 This thy apparent dignity and worth. 50

HERE ending, he conducts her. At the call
 Of his lov'd brother from his couch arose
 Leonidas. In wonder he survey'd
 Th' illustrious virgin, whom his presence aw'd.
 Her eye submissive to the ground declin'd, 55
 In veneration of the godlike man.
 His mien, his voice her anxious dread dispel,
 Benevolent and hospitable thus.

THY looks, fair stranger, amiable and great,
 A mind delineate, which from all commands 60

Supreme regard. Relate, thou noble dame,
 By what relentless destiny compell'd,
 Thy tender feet the paths of darkness tread ;
 Rehearfe th' afflictions, whence thy virtue mourns.

On her wan cheek a sudden blush arose 65
 Like day, first dawning on the twilight pale ;
 When, wrapt in grief, these words a passage found.

If to be most unhappy, and to know
 That hope is irrecoverably fled ;
 If to be great and wretched may deserve 70
 Commiseration from the brave ; behold,
 Thou glorious leader of unconquer'd bands,
 Behold, descended from Darius' loins,
 Th' afflicted Ariana ; and my pray'r
 Accept with pity, nor my tears disdain. 75

First, that I lov'd the best of human race,
 Heroic, wise, adorn'd by ev'ry art,
 Of shame unconscious doth my heart reveal
 This day, in Grecian arms conspicuous clad,
 He fought, he fell. A passion, long conceal'd, 80

For me, alas ! within my brother's arms
 His dying breath resigning, he disclos'd :
 Oh ! I will stay my sorrows ! will forbid
 My eyes to stream before thee, and my breast,
 Q'erwhelm'd by anguish, will from sighs restrain ! 85

For why should thy humanity be griev'd
 At my distress, why learn from me to mourn
 The lot of mortals, doom'd to pain and woe ?
 Hear then, O king, and grant my sole request,
 To seek his body in the heaps of slain. 90

Thus

THUS to the hero su'd the royal maid,
Resembling Ceres in majestic woe,
When supplicating Jove from Stygian gloom,
And Pluto's black embraces to redeem
Her lov'd and lost Proserpina. A while
On Ariana fixing stedfast eyes,
These tender thoughts Leonidas recall'd.

95

SUCH are thy sorrows, O for ever dear,
Who now at Lacedæmon dost deplore
My everlasting absence. Then aside
He turn'd and sigh'd. Recov'ring, he address'd
His brother. Most beneficent of men,
Attend, assist this princess. Night retires
Before the purple-winged morn. A band
Is call'd. The well-remember'd spot they find,
Where Teribazus from his dying hand
Dropt in their sight his formidable sword.
Soon from beneath a pile of Asiatics dead
They saw the hero, by his armour known.

100

105

THEN, Ariana, what transcending pangs
Were thine! what horrors! In thy tender breast
Love still was mightiest. On the bosom cold
Of 'Teribazus, grief-distracted maid,
Thy beauteous limbs were thrown. Thy snowy hue
The clotted gore disfigur'd. On his wounds
Loose flow'd thy hair, and, bubbling from thy eyes,
Impetuous sorrow lav'd th'empurpled clay.
When forth in groans these lamentations broke.

110

115

O TORN for ever from these weeping eyes!
Thou, who despairing to obtain a heart,

120

Which then most lov'd thee, didst untimely yield
 Thy life to fate's inevitable dart
 For her, who now in agony reveals
 Her tender passion, who repeats her vows
 To thy deaf ear, who fondly to her own 125
 Unites thy cheek insensible and cold.
 Alas! do those unmoving, ghastly orbs
 Perceive my gushing sorrow? Can that heart
 At my complaint dissolve the ice of death?
 To share my sufferings? Never, never more 130
 Shall Ariana bend a list'ning ear
 'To thy enchanting eloquence, nor feast
 Her mind on wisdom from thy copious tongue!
 Oh! bitter, insurmountable distress!
 SHE could no more Invincible despair 135
 Suppress'd all utterance. As a marble form,
 Fix'd on the solemn sepulchre, inclines
 The silent head in imitated woe
 O'er some dead hero, whom his country lov'd,
 Entranc'd by anguish, o'er the breathless clay 140
 So hung the princess. On the gory breach,
 Whence life had issued by the fatal blow,
 Mute for a space and motionless she gaz'd;
 When thus in accents firm. Imperial pomp,
 Foe to my quiet, take my last farewell. 145
 There is a state, where only virtue holds
 The rank supreme. My Teribazus there
 From his high order must descend to mine.

THEN with no trembling hand, no change of look,
 She drew a poniard, which her garment veil'd; 150
 And

And instant sheathing in her heart the blade,
On her slain lover silent sunk in death.

The unexpected stroke prevents the care
Of Agis, pierc'd by horror and distress,
Like one, who, standing on a stormy beach, 155
Beholds a found'ring vessel, by the deep
At once engulph'd; his pity feels and mourns,
Depriv'd of pow'r to save: so Agis view'd
The prostrate pair. He dropp'd a tear, and thus.

Oh! much lamented! Heavy on your heads 160
Hath evil fall'n, which o'er your pale remains
Commands this sorrow from a stranger's eye.
Illustrious ruins! May the grave impart
That peace which life deny'd! And now receive
This pious office from a hand unknown. 165

He spake, unclasping from his shoulders broad
His ample robe. He strew'd the waving folds
O'er each wan visage, turning then, address'd
The slave, in ~~more~~ dejection standing near.

Thou, who attendant on this hapless fair, 170
Hast view'd this dreadful spectacle, return.
These bleeding reliques bear to Persia's king,
Thou with four captives, whom I free from bonds.

Art thou a Spartan? interrupts the slave.
Dost thou command me to return, and pine 175
In climes unblest'd by liberty, or laws?
Grant me to see Leonidas. Alone
Let him decide, if wretched, as I seem,
I may not claim protection from this camp.

WHOE'ER thou art, rejoins the chief, amaz'd, 180
 But not offended, thy ignoble garb
 Conceal'd a spirit, which I now revere.
 Thy countenance demands a better lot,
 Than I, a stranger to thy hidden worth,
 Unconscious offer'd. Freedom dwells in Greece, 185
 Humanity and justice. Thou shalt see
 Leonidas their guardian. To the king
 He leads him straight, presents him in these words.

IN mind superior to the base attire,
 Which marks his limbs with shame, a stranger comes, 190
 Who thy protection claims. The slave subjoins.

I STAND thy suppliant now. Thou soon shalt learn,
 If I deserve thy favour. I request
 To meet th' assembled chieftains of this host.
 Oh! I am fraught with tidings, which import 195
 The weal of ev'ry Grecian. Agis swift,
 Appointed by Leonidas, convenes
 The diff'rent leaders. 'To the tent they sped
 Before them call'd, the stranger thus began.

O ALPHEUS! Maron! Hither turn your sight, 200
 And know your brother. From their seats they start.
 From either breaks in ecstasy the name
 Of Polydorus. To his dear embrace
 Each fondly strives to rush; but he withstands:
 While down his cheek a flood of anguish pours 205
 From his dejected eyes, in torture bent
 On that vile garb, dishonouring his form.
 At length these accents, intermix'd with groans,
 A passage found, while mute attention gaz'd.

You

Book IX. L E O N I D A S. 57

You first should know, if this unhappy slave 210
Yet merits your embraces. Then approach'd
Leonidas. Before him all recede,
Ev'n Alpheus' self, and yields his brother's hand,
Which in his own the regal hero press'd.
Still Polydorus on his gloomy front 215

Repugnance stern to consolation bore :
When thus the king with majesty benign.

Lo ! ev'ry heart is open to thy worth.
Injurious fortune, and enfeebling time
By servitude and grief severely try 220
A lib'ral spirit. Try'd, but not subdu'd,
Do thou appear. Whatever be our lot
Is heav'n's appointment. Patience best becomes
The citizen and soldier. Let the sight
Of friends and brethren dissipate thy gloom. 225

Of men the gentlest, Agis too advanc'd,
Who with increas'd humanity began.
~~Now~~ ^{Now} in thy native liberty secure,
Smile on thy pais'd affliction, and relate,
What chance restores thy merit to the arms 230
Of friends and kindred. Polydorus then.

I was a Spartan. When my tender prime
On manhood border'd, from Laconia's shores
Snatch'd by Phœnician pirates, I was sold
A slave, by Hyperanthes bought and giv'n 235
To Ariana. Gracious was her hand.
But I remain'd a bondman, still estrang'd
From Lacedæmon. Demaratus oft
In friendly sorrow would my lot deplore ;
Nor less his own ill-fated virtue mourn'd, 240
Loft

Lost to his country in a servile court,
 The centre of corruption ; where in smiles
 Are painted envy, treachery and hate
 With rankling malice ; where alone sincere
 The dissolute seek no disguise : where those, 245
 Possessing all a monarch can bestow,
 Are far less happy than the meanest heir
 To freedom, far more groveling than the slave
 Who serves their cruel pride. Yet here the sun
 Ten times his yearly circle hath renew'd, 250
 Since Polydorus hath in bondage groan'd.
 My bloom is pass'd, or, pining in despair,
 Untimely wither'd. I at last return
 A messenger of fate, who tidings bear
 Of desolation. Here he paus'd in grief 255
 Redoubled ; when Leonidas. Proceed:
 Should from thy lips inevitable death
 To all be threaten'd, thou art heard by none,
 Whose dauntless hearts can entertain a thought,
 But how to fall the noblest. Thus the king. 260
 The rest in speechless expectation wait.
 Such was the solemn silence, which o'erspread
 The shrine of Amonon, or Dodona's shades,
 When anxious mortals from the mouth of Jove
 Their doom explor'd. Nor Polydorus long 265
 Suspends the council, but resumes his tale.
 As I this night accompany'd the steps
 Of Ariana, near the pass we saw
 A restless form, now traversing the way,
 Now, as a statue, rivetted by doubt, 270
 Then

Then on a sudden starting to renew
 An eager pace. As nearer we approach'd,
 He by the moon, which glimmer'd on our heads,
 Descry'd us. Straight advancing, whither bent
 Our midnight course, he ask'd. I knew the voice 275
 Of Demaratus. To my breast I clasp'd
 The venerable exile, and reply'd.
 Laconia's camp we seek. Demand no more.
 Farewel. He wept. Be heav'n thy guide, he said,
 Thrice happy Polydorus. Thou again 280
 May'st visit Sparta, to these eyes deny'd.
 Soon as arriv'd at those triumphant tents,
 Say to the Spartans from their exil'd king,
 Altho' their blind credulity depriv'd
 The wretched Demaratus of his home ; 285
 From ev'ry joy secluded, from his wife,
 His offspring torn, his countrymen and friends,
 Him from his virtue they could ne'er divide.
 S-v. that I am here, where all are kings, or slaves,
 Amid the riot of ambitious courts 290
 Not quite extinct his Spartan spirit glows,
 Tho' grief hath dimm'd its fires. Rememb'ring this,
 Report, that newly to the Persian host
 Return'd a Malian, Epialtes nam'd,
 Who, as a spy, the Grecian tents had sought. 295
 He to the monarch magnify'd his art,
 Which by delusive eloquence had wrought
 The Greeks to such despair, that ev'ry band
 To Persia's sov'reign standard would have bow'd ;
 Had not the spirit of a single chief, 300
 By

By fear unconquer'd, and on death resolv'd,
 Restor'd their valour : therefore would the king
 Trust to his guidance a selected force,
 They soon should pierce th' unguarded bounds of Greece
 Thro' a neglected aperture above, 305
 Where no Leonidas should bar their way :
 Mean time by him the treach'rous Thebans sent
 Assurance of their aid. Th' assenting prince
 At once decreed two myriads to advance
 With Hyperanthes. Ev'ry lord besides, 310
 Whom youth, or courage, or ambition warm,
 Rous'd by the traitor's eloquence, attend
 From all the nations with a rival zeal
 To enter Greece the foremost. In a sigh
 He clos'd—like me. Tremendous from his seat 315
 Uprose Diomedon. His eyes were flames !
 When swift on trembling Anaxander broke
 These ireful accents on his livid lips.

Yet ere we fall, O traitor, shall this arm
 To hell's avenging furies sink thy head. 320

ALL now is tumult. Ev'ry bosom swells
 With wrath untam'd and vengeance. Half unsheath'd
 Th' impetuous faulchion of Platæa flames.
 But, as the Colchian forcerefs, renown'd
 In legends old, or Circé, when they fram'd 325
 A potent spell, to smoothness charm'd the main,
 And lull'd Æolian rage by mystic song ;
 Till not a billow heav'd against the shore,
 Nor ev'n the wanton-winged zephyr breath'd
 The lightest whisper thro' the magic air : 330

So,

So, when thy voice, Leonidas, is heard,
 Confusion listens; ire in silent awe
 Subsides. Withhold this rashness, cries the king.
 To proof of guilt let punishment succeed.
 Not yet Barbarian shouts our camp alarm.
 We still have time for vengeance, time to know,
 If menac'd ruin we may yet repel,
 Or how most glorious perish. Next arose
 Dieneces, and thus th' experienc'd man.

335

ERE they surmount our fences, Xerxes' troops
 Must learn to conquer, and the Greeks to fly.
 The spears of Phocis guard that secret pass.
 To them let instant messengers depart,
 And note the hostile progress. Alpheus here.

340

LEONIDAS, behold, my willing feet
 Shall to the Phocians bear thy high commands;
 Shall climb the hill to watch th' approaching foe.

345

THOU active son of valour, quick returns
 The ~~light~~ of Lacedæmon, in my thoughts
 For ever present, when the public weal
 Requires the swift, the vigilant and bold.
 Go, climb, surmount the rock's aerial height.
 Observe the hostile march. A Spartan band,
 Dieneces, provide. Thyself conduct
 Their speedy succour to our Phocian friends.

350

355

THE council rises. For his course prepar'd,
 While day, declining, prompts his eager feet,
 O Polydorus, Alpheus thus in haste,
 Long lost, and late recover'd, we must part
 Again, perhaps for ever. Thou return

360

To kiss the sacred soil, which gave thee birth,
And calls thee back to freedom. Brother dear,
I should have sighs to give thee—but farewell.
My country chides me, loit'ring in thy arms.

THIS said, he darts along, nor looks behind, 365
When Polydorus answers. Alpheus, no.
I have the marks of bondage to erase.
My blood must wash the shameful stain away.

WE have a father, Maron interpos'd.
Thy unexpected presence will revive 370
His heavy age, now childless and forlorn.

To him the brother with a gloomy frown.
Ill should I comfort others. View these eyes.
Faint is their light; and vanish'd was my bloom
Before its hour of ripeness. In my breast 375
Grief will retain a mansion, nor by time
Be dispossest'd. Unceasing shall my soul
Brood o'er the black remembrance of my youth,
In slavery exhausted. Life to me
Hath lost its favour. Then in sullen mood 380
His head declines. His brother pleads in vain.

Now in his view Dienece appears'd
With Sparta's band. Immoveable his eyes
On them he fix'd, revolving these dark thoughts.

I too like them from Lacedæmon spring, 385
Like them instructed once to poise the spear,
To lift the pond'rous shield. Ill-destin'd wretch!
Thy arm is grown enervate, and would sink
Beneath a buckler's weight. Malignant fates!
Who have compell'd my free-born hand to change 390
The

The warrior's arms for ignominious bonds ;
 Would you compensate for my chains, my shame,
 My ten years anguish, and the fell despair,
 Which on my youth have prey'd ; relenting once,
 Grant I may bear my buckler to the field, 395
 And, known a Spartan, seek the shades below.

WHY to be known a Spartan must thou seek
 The shades below ? impatient Maron spake.
 Live, and be known a Spartan by thy deeds.
 Live, and enjoy thy dignity of birth. 400
 Live, and perform the duties which become
 A citizen of Sparta. Still thy brow
 Frowns gloomy, still unyielding. He, who leads
 Our band, all fathers of a noble race,
 Will ne'er permit thy barren day to close 405
 Without an offspring to uphold the state.

He will, replies the brother in a glow,
 Prevailing o'er the paleness of his cheek,
 He will permit me to compleat by death
 The measure of my duty ; will permit 410
 Me to achieve a service, which no hand
 But mine can render, to adorn his fall
 With double lustre, strike the barb'rous foe
 With endless terror, and avenge the shame
 Of an enslav'd Laconian. Closing here 415
 His words mysterious, quick he turn'd away
 To find the tent of Agis. There his hand
 In grateful sorrow minister'd her aid ;
 While the humane, the hospitable care
 Of Agis gently by her lover's corse 420

On one sad bier the pallid beauties laid
 Of Ariana. He from bondage freed
 Four eastern captives, whom his gen'rous arm
 'That day had spar'd in battle ; then began
 'This solemn charge. You, Persians, whom my sword 425
 Acquir'd in war, unransom'd shall depart.
 'To you I render freedom, which you fought
 'To wrest from me. One recompence I ask,
 And one alone. Transport to Asia's camp
 'This bleeding princess. Bid the Persian king 430
 Weep o'er this flow'r, untimely cut in bloom.
 'Then say, th' all-judging pow'rs have thus ordain'd.
 'Thou, whose ambition o'er the groaning earth
 Leads desolation ; o'er the nations spreads
 Calamity and tears ; thou first shalt mourn, 435
 And thro' thy house destruction first shall range.

DISMISS'D, they gain the rampart, where on guard
 Was Dithyrambus posted. He perceiv'd
 The mournful bier approach. To him the fate
 Of Ariana was already told. 440

He met the captives, with a moisten'd eye,
 Full bent on Teribazus, sigh'd and spake.

O THAT, assuming with those Grecian arms
 A Grecian spirit, thou in scorn hadst look'd
 On princes ! Worth like thine, from slavish courts 445
 Withdrawn, had ne'er been waded to support
 A king's injustice. Then a gentler lot
 Had bless'd thy life. or, dying, thou hadst known,
 How sweet is death for liberty. A Greek
 Affords these friendly wishes, tho' his head 450
 Had

Had lost the honours gather'd from thy fall,
When fortune favour'd, or propitious Jove
Smil'd on the better cause. Ill-fated pair,
Whom in compassion's purest dew I lave,
But that my hand infix'd the deathful wound, 455
And must be grievous to your loathing shades,
From all the neighb'ring vallies would I cull
Their fairest growth, to strew your hearse with flow'rs.
Yet, O accept these tears and pious pray'rs !
May peace surround your ashes ! May your shades 460
Pass o'er the silent pool to happier seats !

He ceas'd in tears. The captives leave the wall,
And slowly down Thermopylæ proceed.

THE END OF THE NINTH BOOK.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE TENTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Medon convenes the Locrian commanders, and harangues them; repairs at midnight to his sister Melissa in the temple, and receives from her the first intelligence, that the Persians were in actual possession of the upper Streights, which had been abandoned by the Phocians. Melibæus brings her tidings of her father's death. She strictly enjoins her brother to preserve his life by a timely retreat, and recommends the enforcement of her advice to the prudence and zeal of Melibæus. In the morning the bodies of Teribæus and Ariana are brought into the presence of Xerxes, soon after a report had reached the camp that great part of his navy was shipwrecked. The Persian monarch, quite dispirited, is persuaded by Argestes to send an ambassador to the Spartan king. Argestes himself is deputed, who, after revealing his embassy in secret to Leonidas, is by him led before the whole army, and there receives his answer. Alpheus returns, and declares, that the enemy was master of the hills, and would arrive at Thermopylæ the next morning; upon which Leonidas offers to send away all the troops except his three hundred Spartans; but Diomedon, Demophilus, Dithyrambus, and Megistias refuse to depart: then to relieve the perplexity of Medon on this occasion, he transfers to him the supreme command, dismisses Argestes, orders the companions of his own fate to be ready in arms by sunset, and retires to his pavilion.

THE

THE Grecian leaders, from the counsel ris'n,
 Among the troops dispersing, by their words,
 Their looks undaunted warm the coldest heart
 Against new dangers threat'ning. To his tent
 The Locrian captains Medon swift convenes, 5
 Exhorting thus O long-approv'd my friends,
 You, who have seen my father in the field
 Triumphant, bold assistants of my arm
 In labours not inglorious, who this day
 Have rais'd fresh trophies, be prepar'd. If help 10
 Be further wanted in the Phocian camp,
 You will the next be summon'd. Locris lies
 To ravage first expos'd. Your ancient fane,
 Your goddesses, your priestess half-ador'd,
 The daughter of Oileus, from your swords 15
 Protection claim against an impious foe.

ALL anxious for Melissa, he dismiss'd
 Th' applauding vet'rans ; to the sacred cave
 Then hasten'd. Under heav'n's night-shaded cope
 He mus'd. Melissa in her holy place 20
 How to approach with inauspicious steps,
 How to accost his pensive mind revolv'd :
 When Mycon, pious vassal of the fane,
 Descending thro' the cavern, at the sight
 Of Medon stopp'd, and thus. Thy presence, lord, 25
 The priestess calls. To Lacedæmon's king
 I bear a message, suffering no delay.

He quits the chief, whose rapid feet ascend,
 Soon ent'ring, where the pedestal displays
 Thy form, Calliopé sublime. The lyre, 30
 Whose

Whose accents immortality confer,
 Thy fingers seem to wake. On either side,
 The snowy gloss of Parian marble shews
 Four of thy sisters thro' surrounding shade.
 Before each image is a virgin plac'd. 35
 Before each virgin dimly burns a lamp,
 Whose livid spires just temper with a gleam
 The dead obscurity of night. Apart
 The priestesses thoughtful sit. Thus Medon breaks
 The solemn silence. Anxious for thy state, 40
 Without a summons to thy pure abode
 I was approaching. Deities, who know
 The present, past and future, let my lips,
 Unblam'd, have utterance. Thou, my sister, hear.
 Thy breast let wisdom strengthen. Impious foes 45
 Thro' Oeta now are passing. She replies.

ARE passing, brother! They, alas! are pass'd,
 Are in possession of the upper Streight.
 Hear in thy turn. A dire narration hear.
 A favour'd goat, conductor of my herd, 50
 Stray'd to a dale, whose outlet is the post
 To Phocians left, and penetrates to Greece.
 Him Mycon following, by a hostile band,
 Light-arm'd forerunners of a num'rous host,
 Was seiz'd. By fear of menac'd torments forc'd, 55
 He shew'd a passage up that mountain's side,
 Whose length of wood o'ershades the Phocian land.
 To dry and sapless trunks in diff'rent parts
 Fire, by the Persians artfully apply'd,
 Soon grew to flames. This done, the troop return'd, 60

Detaining

Detaining Mycon. Now the mountain blaz'd.
 The Phocians, ill-commanded, left their post,
 Alarm'd, confus'd. More distant ground they chose.
 In blind delusion forming there, they spread
 Their ineffectual banners to repel 65

Imagin'd peril from those fraudulent lights,
 By stratagem prepar'd. A real foe
 Mean time secur'd the undefended pass.
 This Mycon saw. Escaping thence to me,
 He by my orders hastens to inform 70

Leonidas. She paus'd. Like one, who sees
 The forked light'ning into shivers rive
 A knotted oak, or crumble tow'rs to dust,
 Aghast was Medon ; then, recov'ring, spake.

THOU boasted glory of th' Oilean house, 75
 If e'er thy brother bow'd in rev'rence due
 To thy superior virtues, let his voice
 Be now regarded. From th' endanger'd fane,
 My sister, fly. Whatever be my lot,
 A troop select of Locrians shall transport 80
 Thy sacred person where thy will ordains.

THINK not of me, returns the dame. To Greece
 Direct thy zeal. My peasants are conven'd,
 That by their labour, when the fatal hour
 Requires, with massy fragments I may bar 85
 That cave to human entrance. Best lov'd
 Of brothers, now a serious ear inclin'd.
 A while in Greece to fortune's wanton gale
 His golden banner shall the Persian king,
 Deluded, wave. Leonidas, by death 90
 Preserving

Preserving Sparta, will his spirit leave
 To blast the glitt'ring pageant. Medon, live
 To share that glory. Thee to perish here
 No law, no oracle enjoins. To die,
 Uncall'd, is blameful. Let thy pious hand 95
 Secure Oileus from Barbarian force.

To Sparta mindful of her noble host
 Entrust his rev'rend head. Th' assembled hinds,
 Youths, maidens, wives with nurselings at their breasts,
 Around her now in consternation-flood, 100
 The women weeping, mute, aghast the men.
 To them she turns. You never, faithful race,
 Your priestesses shall forsake. Melissa here,
 Despairing never of the public weal,
 For better days in solitude shall wait, 105
 Shall cheer your sadness. My prophetic soul
 Sees thro' time's cloud the liberty of Greece
 More stable, more effulgent. In his blood
 Leonidas cements th' unshaken base
 Of that strong tow'r which Athens shall exalt 110
 To cast a shadow o'er the eastern world.

THIS utter'd, tow'rd the temple's inmost feat
 Of sanctity her solemn step she bends,
 Devout, enraptur'd. In their dark'ning lamps
 The pallid flames are fainting. Dim thro' mists 115
 The morning peeps. An awful silence reigns.
 While Medon pensive from the fane descends,
 But instant re-appears. Behind him close
 Treads Melibœus, thro' the cavern's mouth
 Ascending pale in aspect, not unlike 120
 What

What legends tell of spectres, by the force
Of necromantic sorcery constrain'd;
Thro' earth's dark bowels, which the spell disjoin'd,
They from death's mansion in reluctant sloth
Rose to divulge the secrets of their graves, 125
Or mysteries of fate. His cheerful brow,
O'erclouded, paleness on his healthful cheek,
A dull, unwonted heaviness of pace
Portend disastrous tidings. Medon spake.

TURN, holy sister. By the gods below'd, 130
May they sustain thee in this mournful hour.
Our father, good Oileus is no more.
Rehearse thy tidings, swain. He takes the word.

THOU wast not present, when his mind, outstretch'd
By zeal for Greece, transported by his joy 135
To entertain Leonidas, refus'd
Due rest. Old age his ardour had forgot,
To his last waking moment with his guest
In rapt'rous talk redundant. He at last,
Compos'd and smiling in th' embrace of sleep, 140
To Pan's protection at the island fane
Was left. He wak'd no more. The fatal news,
To you discover'd, from the chiefs I hide.

MELISSA heard, inclin'd her forehead low
Before th' insculptur'd deities. A sigh 145
Broke from her heart, these accents from her lips.

THE full of days and honours thro' the gate
Of painless slumber is retir'd. His tomb
Shall stand among his fathers in the shade
Of his own trophies. Placid were his days, 150
Which

Which flow'd thro' blessings. As a river pure,
 Whose sides are flow'ry, and whose meadows fair,
 Meets in his course a subterranean void ;
 There dips his silver head, again to rise,
 And, rising, glide thro' flow'rs and meadows new : 155
 So shall Oiléus in those happier fields,
 Where never tempests roar, nor humid clouds
 In mists dissolve, nor white-descending flakes
 Of winter violate th' eternal green ;
 Where never gloom of trouble shakes the mind, 160
 Nor gust of passion heaves the quiet breast,
 Nor dews of grief are sprinkled. Thou art gone,
 Host of divine Leonidas on earth,
 Art gone before him to prepare the feast,
 Immortalizing virtue. Silent here, 165
 Around her head she wraps her hallow'd pall.
 Her prudent virgins interpose a hymn,
 Not in a plaintive, but majestic flow,
 To which their fingers, sweeping o'er the chords,
 The lyre's full tone attemper. She unveils, 170
 Then with a voice, a countenance compos'd.

Go, Medon, pillar of th' Oïlean house.
 New cares, new duties claim thy precious life.
 Perform the pious obsequies. Let tears,
 Let groans be absent from the sacred dust, 175
 Which heav'n in life so favour'd, more in death.
 A term of righteous days, an envy'd urn
 Like his, for Medon is Melissa's pray'r.
 Thou, Melibœus, cordial, high in rank
 Among the prudent, warn and watch thy lord. 180
 My benediction shall reward thy zeal.

SOOTH'D

SOOTH'D by the blessings of such perfect lips,
 They both depart. And now the climbing sun
 To Xerxes' tent discover'd from afar
 The Persian captives with their mournful load. 185
 Before them rumour thro' her sable trump
 Breathes lamentation. Horror lends his voice
 To spread the tidings of disastrous fate
 Along Spercheos. As-a vapour black,
 Which, from the distant, horizontal verge 190
 Ascending, nearer still and nearer bends
 To higher lands its progress, there condens'd,
 'Throws darkness o'er the valleys, while the face
 Of nature saddens round; so step by step,
 In motion slow th' advancing bier diffus'd 195
 A solemn sadness o'er the camp. A hedge
 Of trembling spears on either hand is form'd.
 Tears underneath his iron-pointed cone
 The Sacian drops. The Caspian savage feels
 'His heart transpierc'd, and wonders at the pain. 200
 In Xerxes' presence are the bodies plac'd,
 Nor he forbids. His agitated breast
 All night had weigh'd against his future hopes
 His present losses, his defeated ranks,
 By myriads thinn'd, their multitude abash'd, 205
 His fleet thrice worsted, torn by storms, reduc'd
 To half its number. When he slept, in dreams
 He saw the haggard dead, which floated round
 Th' adjoining strands. Disasters new their ghosts
 In sullen frowns, in shrill upbraidings bode. 210
 'Thus, ere the gory bier approach'd his eyes,

He in dejection had already lost
 His kingly pride, the parent of disdain,
 And cold indifference to human woes.
 Not ev'n beside his sister's nobler corse 215
 Her humble lover could awake his scorn.
 The captives told their piercing tale. He heard ;
 He felt a while compassion. But ere long
 Those traces vanish'd from the tyrant's breast.
 His former gloom redoubles. For himself 220
 His anxious bosom heaves, oppress'd by fear,
 Left he with all his splendor should be cast
 A prey to fortune. Thoughtful near the throne
 Laconia's exile waits, to whom the king.
 O DEMARATUS, what will fate ordain ! 225
 Lo ! fortune turns against me. What shall check
 Her further malice, when her daring stride
 Invades my house with ravage, and profanes
 The blood of great Darius. I have sent
 From my unguarded side the chosen band, 230
 My bravest chiefs to pass the desert hill ;
 Have to the conduct of a Malian spy
 My hopes entrusted. May not there the Greeks
 In opposition more tremendous still,
 More ruinous than yester sun beheld, 235
 Maintain their post invincible, renew
 Their stony thunder in augmented rage,
 And send whole quarries down the craggy steeps
 Again to crush my army ? Oh ! unfold
 Thy secret thoughts, nor hide the harshest truth. 240
 Say, what remains to hope ? The exile here.

Too well, O monarch, do thy fears preface
 What may befall thy army. If the Greeks,
 Arrang'd within Thermopylæ, a pass
 Accessible and practis'd, could repel. 245
 With such destruction their unnumber'd foes ;
 What scenes of havoc may untrodden paths,
 Confin'd among the craggy hills, afford ?

Lost in despair, the monarch silent sat.
 Not less unmann'd than Xerxes, from his place 250
 Up rose Argestes ; but concealing fear,
 These artful words deliver'd. If the king
 Propitious wills to spare his faithful bands,
 Nor spread at large the terrors of his pow'r ;
 More gentle means of conquest, than by arms, 255
 Nor less secure may artifice supply.
 Renown'd Darius, thy immortal fire,
 Bright in the spoil of kingdoms, long in vain
 The fields of proud Euphrates with his host
 O'erspread. At length, confiding in the wiles 260
 Of Zopyrus, the mighty prince subdu'd
 The Babylonian ramparts. Who shall count
 The thrones and states by stratagem o'erturn'd ?
 But if corruption join her pow'rful aid,
 Not one can stand. What race of men possess 265
 That probity, that wisdom, which the veil
 Of craft shall never blind, nor proffer'd wealth,
 Nor splendid pow'r seduce ? O Xerxes, born
 To more than mortal greatness, canst thou find
 Thro' thy unbounded sway no dazzling gift, 270
 Which may allure Leonidas ? Dispel

The cloud of sadness from those sacred eyes.
 Great monarch, proffer to Laconia's chief,
 What may thy own magnificence declare,
 And win his friendship. O'er his native Greece 275
 Invest him sov'reign. Thus procure his sword
 For thy succeeding conquests. Xerxes here,
 As from a trance awak'ning, swift replies.

Wise are thy dictates. Fly to Sparta's chief.
 Argestes, fall before him. Bid him join 280
 My arms, and reign o'er ev'ry Grecian state.

He scarce had finish'd, when in haste approach'd
 Artuchus. Startled at the ghastly stage
 Of death, that guardian of the Persian fair
 Thus in a groan. Thou deity malign, 285
 O Arimanius, what a bitter draught
 For my sad lips thy cruelty hath mix'd !
 Is this the flow'r of women, to my charge
 So lately giv'n ? Oh ! princess, I have rang'd
 The whole Sperchean valley, woods and caves, 290
 In quest of thee, found here a lifeless corse.
 Astonishment and horror lock my tongue.

Pride now reviving in the monarch's breast,
 Dispell'd his black despondency a while,
 With gall more black effacing from his heart 295
 Each merciful impression. Stern he spake.

Remove her, satrap, to the female train.
 Let them the due solemnities perform.
 But never she, by Mithra's light I swear,
 Shall sleep in Susa with her kindred dust, 300
 Who by ignoble passion hath debas'd

The

The blood of Xerxes. Greece beheld her shame ;
 Let Greece behold her tomb. The low-born slave,
 Who dar'd to Xerxes' sister lift his hopes,
 On some bare crag expose. The Spartan here. 305

My royal patron, let me speak—and die,
 If such thy will. This cold, disfigur'd clay
 Was late thy soldier, gallantly who fought,
 Who nobly perish'd, long the dearest friend
 Of Hyperanthes, hazarding his life 310
 Now in thy cause. O'er Persians dost thou reign ?
 None more than Persians venerate the brave.

WELL hath he spoke, Artuchus firm subjoins.
 But if the king his rigour will inflict
 On this dead warrior—Heav'n, o'erlook the deed, 315
 Nor on our heads accumulate fresh woes !

The shatter'd fleet, th' intimidated camp,
 The band select, thro' Oeta's dang'rous wilds
 At this dread crisis struggling, must obtain
 Support from heav'n, or Asia's glory falls. 320

FELL pride, recoiling at these awful words
 In Xerxes' frozen bosom, yields to fear,
 Resuming there the sway. He grants the corse
 To Demaratus. Forth Artuchus moves
 Behind the bier, uplifted by his train. 325

ARGESTES, parted from his master's side,
 Ascends a car, and, speeding o'er the beach,
 Sees Artemisia. She the ashes pale
 Of slaughter'd Carians on the pyre consum'd,
 Was then collecting for the fun'ral vase 330
 In exclamation thus. My subjects, lost

On earth, descend to happier climes below——
 The fawning, dastard counsellors, who left
 Your worth deserted in the hour of need,
 May kites disfigure, may the wolf devour—— 335

Shade of my husband, thou salute in smiles
 These gallant warriors, faithful once to thee,
 Nor less to me. They tidings will report
 Of Artemisia to revive thy love——
 May wretches like Argestes never clasp 340

Their wives, their offspring! Never greet their homes!
 May their unbury'd limbs dismiss their ghosts
 To wait for ever on the banks of Styx!

THEN, turning tow'rd her son. Come, virtuous boy.
 Let us transport these reliques of our friends 345
 To yon tall bark, in pendent sable clad.

They, if her keel be destin'd to return,
 Shall in paternal monuments repose.
 Let us embark. Till Xerxes shuts his ear
 To false Argestes, in her vessel hid, 350

Shall Artemisia's gratitude lament
 Her bounteous sov'reign's fate. Leander, mark.
 The Doric virtues are not eastern plants.
 Them foster still within thy gen'rous breast,
 But keep in covert from the blaze of courts; 355

Where flatt'ry's guile in oily words profuse,
 In action tardy, o'er th'ingenuous tongue,
 The arm of valour, and the faithful heart
 Will ever triumph. Yet my soul enjoys
 Her own preface, that destiny reserves 360

An hour for my revenge. Concluding here,

She

She gains the fleet. Argestes sweeps along
On rapid wheels from Artemisia's view,
Like Night, protectress foul of heinous deeds,
With treason, rape and murder at her heel, 365
Before the eye of morn retreating swift,
To hide her loathsome visage. Soon he reach'd
Thermopylæ ; descending from his car,
Was led by Dithyrambus to the tent
Of Sparta's ruler. Since the fatal news 370
By Mycon late deliver'd, he apart
With Polydorus had consulted long
On high attempts ; and, now sequester'd, sat
To ruminate on vengeance. At his feet
Prone fell the satrap, and began. The will 375
Of Xerxes bends me prostrate to the earth
Before thy presence. Great and matchless chief,
Thus says the lord of Asia. Join my arms ;
Thy recompence is Greece. Her fruitful plains,
Her gen'rous flocks, her flocks, her num'rous towns, 380
Her sons I render to thy sov'reign hand.
And, O illustrious warrior, heed my words.
Think on the bliss of royalty, the pomp
Of courts, their endless pleasures, trains of slaves,
Who restless watch for thee, and thy delights : 385
Think on the glories of unrivall'd sway.
Look on th' Ionic, on th' Æolian Greeks.
From them their phantom liberty is flown ;
While in each province, rais'd by Xerxes' power,
Some favour'd chief presides ; exalted state, 390
Ne'er giv'n by envious freedom. On his head

He

He bears the gorgeous diadem ; he sees
 His equals once in adoration stoop.
 Beneath his footstool. What superior beams
 Will from thy temples blaze, when gen'ral Greece, 395
 In noblest states abounding, calls thee lord,
 Thee only worthy. How will each rejoice
 Around thy throne, and hail th' auspicious day,
 When thou, distinguish'd by the Persian king,
 Didst in thy sway consenting nations bless, 400.
 Didst calm the fury of unsparing war,
 Which else had delug'd all with blood and flames.

LEONIDAS replies not, but commands
 The Thespian youth, still watchful near the tent,
 To summon all the Grecians. He obeys. 405
 The king uprises from his seat, and bids
 The Persian follow. He, amaz'd, attends,
 Surrounded soon by each assembling band ;
 When thus at length the godlike Spartan spake,

HERE, Persian, tell thy embassy. Repeat, 410
 That to obtain my friendship Asia's prince
 To me hath proffer'd sov'reignty o'er Greece.
 Then view these bands, whose valour shall preserve
 That Greece unconquer'd, which your king bestows,
 Shall strew your bodies on her crimson'd plains : 415
 The indignation, painted on their looks,
 Their gen'rous scorn may answer for their chief.
 Yet from Leonidas, thou wretch, inur'd
 To vassalage and baseness, hear. The pomp,
 The arts of pleasure in despotic courts 420
 I spurn abhorrent. In a spotless heart

I look

I look for pleasure. I from righteous deeds
 Derive my splendor. No adoring croud,
 No purpled slaves, no mercenary spears
 My state embarrass. I in Sparta rule 425
 By laws, my rulers, with a guard unknown
 To Xerxes, public confidence and love.
 No pale suspicion of th'empoison'd bowl,
 Th'assassin's poniard, or provok'd revolt
 Chace from my decent couch the peace, deny'd 430
 To his resplendent canopy. Thy king,
 Who hath profan'd by proffer'd bribes my ear,
 Dares not to meet my arm. Thee, trembling slave,
 Whose embassy was treason, I despise,
 And therefore spare. Diomedon subjoins. 435

OUR marble temples these Barbarians waste,
 A crime less impious, than a bare attempt
 Of sacrilege on virtue. Grant my suit,
 Thou living temple, where the goddess dwells.
 To me consign the caitiff. Soon the winds 440
 Shall parch his limbs on Oeta's tallest pine.

AMIDST his fury suddenly return'd
 The speed of Alpheus. All, suspended, fix'd
 On him their eyes impatient. He began.

I AM return'd a messenger of ill. 445
 Close to the passage, op'ning into Greece,
 That post committed to the Phocian guard,
 O'erhangs a bushy cliff. A station there
 Behind the shrubs by dead of night I took,
 Tho' not in darkness. Purple was the face 450
 Of heav'n Beneath my feet the vallies glow'd.

A range immense of wood-invested hills,
 The boundaries of Greece, were clad in flames ;
 An act of froward chance, or crafty foes
 To cast dismay. The crackling pines I heard ; 455
 Their branches sparkled, and the thickets blaz'd.
 In hillocks embers rose. Embod'ed fire,
 As from unnumber'd furnaces, I saw
 Mount high thro' vacant trunks of headless oaks,
 Broad-bas'd, and dry with age. Barbarian helmets, 460
 Shields, javelins, sabres, gleaming from below,
 Full soon discover'd to my tortur'd sight
 'The streights in Persia's pow'r. The Phocian chief.
 Whate'er the cause, relinquishing his post,
 Was to a neighb'ring eminence remov'd ; 465
 There, by the foe neglected, or contemn'd,
 Remain'd in arms, and neither fled, nor fought.
 I staid for day-spring. Then the Persians mov'd.
 To-morrow's sun will see their numbers here.

He said no more. Unutterable fear 470
 In horrid silence wraps the list'ning croud ;
 Aghast, confounded. Silent are the chiefs,
 Who feel no terror ; yet in wonder fix'd,
 Thick-wedg'd, inclose Leonidas around,
 Who thus in calmest elocution spake. 475

I now behold the oracle fulfill'd.
 Then art thou near, thou glorious, sacred hour,
 Which shall my country's liberty secure.
 Thrice hail ! thou solemn period. Thee the tongues
 Of virtue, fame and freedom shall proclaim, 480
 Shall celebrate in ages yet unborn.

Thou

Thou godlike offspring of a godlike fire,
To him my kindest greetings, Medon, bear.
Farewel, Megistias, holy friend and brave.

Thou too, experienc'd, venerable chief, 485
Demophilus, farewel. Farewel to thee,
Invincible Diomedon ; to thee,

Unequali'd Dithyrambus ; and to all,
Ye other dauntless warriors, who may claim
Praise from my lips, and friendship from my heart. 490

You after all the wonders, which your swords
Have here accomplish'd, will enrich your names
By fresh renown. Your valour must compleat
What ours begins. Here first th' astonish'd foe
On dying Spartans shall with terror gaze, 495

And tremble while he conquers. Then, by fate
Led from his dreadful victory to meet
United Greece in phalanx o'er the plain,
By your avenging spears himself shall fall.

FORTH from the assembly strides Platæa's chief. 500

By the twelve gods, enthron'd in heav'n supreme ;
By my fair name, unfully'd yet, I swear,
Thine eye, Leonidas, shall ne'er behold
Diomedon forsake thee. First let strength
Desert my limbs, and fortitude my heart. 505

Did I not face the Marathonian war ?
Have I not seen Thermopylæ ? What more
Can fame bestow, which I should wait to share ?
Where can I, living, purchase brighter praise,
Than dying here ? What more illustrious tomb 510
Can I obtain, than, bury'd in the heaps

Of

Of Persians, fall'n my victims, on this rock
To lie distinguish'd by a thousand wounds ?

He ended ; when Demophilus. O king
Of Lacedæmon, pride of human race, 515

Whom none e'er equall'd, but the seed of Jove,
Thy own forefather, number'd with the gods,
Lo ! I am old. With falt'ring steps I tread
The prone descent of years. My country claim'd
My youth, my ripeness. Feeble age but yields 520
An empty name of service. What remains

For me unequal to the winged speed
Of active hours, which court the swift and young ?
What eligible wish can wisdom form,
But to die well ? Demophilus shall close 525

With thee, O hero, on this glorious earth
His eve of life. The youth of Thespia next
Address'd Leonidas. O first of Greeks,
Me too think worthy to attend thy fame
With this most dear, this venerable man, 530
For ever honour'd from my tend'rest age,
Ev'n till on life's extremity we part.

Nor too aspiring let my hopes be deem'd ;
Should the Barbarian in his triumph mark
My youthful limbs among the gory heaps, 535
Perhaps remembrance may unnerve his arm
In future fields of contest with a race,
To whom the flow'r, the blooming joys of life,
Are less alluring than a noble death.

To him his second parent. Wilt thou bleed, 540
My Dithyrambus ? But I here withhold

All

All counsel from thee, who art wise, as brave.

I know thy magnanimity. I read

Thy gen'rous thoughts. Decided is thy choice.

Come then, attendants on a godlike shade, 545

When to th' Elysiac ancestry of Greece

Descends her great protector, we will shew

To Harmatides an illustrious son,

And no unworthy brother. We will link

Our shields together. We will press the ground, 550

Still undivided in the arms of death.

So if th' attentive traveller we draw

To our cold reliques, wond'ring, shall he trace

The diff'rent scene, then pregnant with applause,

O wise old man, exclaim, the hour of fate 555

Well didst thou choose ; and, O unequal'd youth,

Who for thy country didst thy bloom devote,

May'st thou remain for ever dear to fame !

May time rejoice to name thee ! O'er thy urn

• May everlasting peace her pinion spread ! 560

THIS said, the hero with his lifted shield

His face o'ershades ; he drops a secret tear :

Not this a tear of anguish, but deriv'd

From fond affection, grown mature with time,

Awak'd a manly tenderness alone, 565

Unmix'd with pity, or with vain regret.

A STREAM of duty, gratitude and love

Flow'd from the heart of Harmatides' son,

Addressing straight Leonidas, whose looks

Declar'd unspeakable applause. O king 570

Of Lacedæmon, now distribute praise

From thy accustom'd justice, small to me,
 To him a portion large. His guardian care,
 His kind instruction, his example train'd
 My infancy, my youth. From him I learn'd 575
 To live unspotted. Could I less, than learn
 From him to die with honour? Medon hears.
 Shook by a whirlwind of contending thoughts,
 Strong heaves his manly bosom, under awe
 Of wise Melissa, torn by friendship, fir'd 580
 By such example high. In dubious state
 So rolls a vessel, when th' inflated waves
 Her planks assail, and winds her canvases rend;
 The rudder labours, and requires a hand
 Of firm, deliberate skill. The gen'rous king 585
 Perceives the hero's struggle, and prepares
 'To interpose relief; when instant came
 Diencæes before them. Short he spake.

BARBARIAN myriads thro' the secret pass
 Have enter'd Greece. Leonidas, by morn. 590
 Expect them here. My slender force I spar'd.
 There to have dy'd was useless. We return
 With thee to perish. Union of our strength
 Will render more illustrious to ourselves,
 And to the foe more terrible our fall. 595

MEGISTIAS last accosts Laconia's king.
 Thou, whom the gods have chosen to exalt
 Above mankind in virtue and renown,
 O call me not presumptuous, who implore
 Among these heroes thy regardful ear. 600
 To Lacedæmon I a stranger came,

There

There found protection. There to honours rais'd,
I have not yet the benefit repaid.

That now the gen'rous Spartans may behold

In me their large beneficence not vain, 605

Here to their cause I consecrate my breath.

Not so, Megistias, interpos'd the king.

Thou and thy son retire. Again the fear.

FORBID it, thou eternally ador'd,

O Jove, confirm my persevering soul ! 610

Nor let me these auspicious moments lose,

When to my bounteous patrons I may shew,

That I deserv'd their favour. Thou, my child,

Dear Menalippus, heed the king's command,

And my paternal tenderness revere. 615

Thou from these ranks withdraw thee, to my use

Thy arms surrend'ring. Fortune will supply

New proofs of valour. Vanquish then, or find

A glorious grave; but spare thy father's eye

The bitter anguish to behold thy youth 620

~~Un~~timely bleed before him. Grief suspends

His speech, and interchangeably their arms

Impart the last embraces. Either weeps,

The hoary parent, and the blooming son.

BUT from his temples the pontific wreath 625

Megistias now unloofens. He resigns

His hallow'd vestments ; while the youth in tears

The helmet o'er his parent's snowy locks,

O'er his broad chest adjusts the radiant mail.

DIENECEs was nigh. Oppress'd by shame, 630

His downcast visage Menalippus hid

From him, who cheerful thus. Thou need'st not blush.
 Thou hear'st thy father and the king command,
 What I suggested, thy departure hence.
 'Train'd by my care, a soldier thou return'st. 635
 Go, practise my instructions. Oft in fields
 Of future conflict may thy prowess call
 Me to remembrance. Spare thy words. Farewel.

WHILE such contempt of life, such fervid zeal
 To die with glory animate the Greeks, 640
 Far diff'rent thoughts possess Argestes' soul.
 Amaze and mingled terror chill his blood.
 Cold drops, distill'd from ev'ry pore, bedew
 His shiv'ring flesh. His bosom pants. His knees
 Yield to their burden. Ghastly pale his cheeks, 645
 Pale are his lips and trembling. Such the minds
 Of slaves corrupt; on them the beauteous face
 Of virtue turns to horror. But these words
 From Lacedæmon's chief the wretch relays.

RETURN to Xerxes. Tell him, on this rock 650
 The Grecians faithful to their trust await
 His chosen myriads. Tell him, thou hast seen,
 How far the lust of empire is below
 A freeborn spirit; that my death, which seals
 My country's safety, is indeed a boon, 655
 His folly gives, a precious boon, which Greece
 Will by perdition to his throne repay.

HE said. The Persian hastens thro' the pass.
 Once more the stern Diomedon arose.
 Wrath overcast his forehead, while he spake. 660

YET

YET more must stay and bleed. Detested Thebes
 Ne'er shall receive her traitors back. This spot
 Shall see their perfidy aton'd by death,
 Ev'n from that pow'r, to which their abject hearts
 Have sacrific'd their faith. Nor dare to hope, 665
 Ye vile deserters of the public weal,
 Ye coward slaves, that, mingled in the heaps
 Of gen'rous victims to their country's good,
 You shall your shame conceal. Whoe'er shall pass
 Along this field of glorious slain, and mark 670
 For veneration ev'ry nobler corse ;
 His heart, tho' warm in rapturous applause,
 A while shall curb the transport to repeat
 His execrations o'er such impious heads,
 On whom that fate, to others yielding same, 675
 Is infamy and vengeance. Dreadful thus
 On the pale Thebans sentence he pronounc'd,
 Like Rhadamanthus from th' infernal seat
 Of judgment, which inexorably dooms
 The guilty dead to ever-during pain ; 680
 While Phlegethon his flaming volumes rolls
 Before their sight, and ruthless furies shake
 Their hissing serpents. All the Greeks assent
 In clamours, echoing thro' the concave rock.
 Forth Anaxander in th' assembly stood, 685
 Which he address'd with indignation feign'd.

If yet your clamours, Grecians, are allay'd,
 Lo ! I appear before you to demand,
 Why these my brave companions, who alone
 Among the Thebans thro' dissuading crouds 690

Their

Their passage forc'd to join your camp, should bear
 The name of traitors ? By an exil'd wretch
 We are traduc'd, by Demaratus, driv'n
 From Spartan confines, who hath meanly fought
 Barbarian courts for shelter. Hath he drawn 695
 Such virtues thence, that Sparta, who before
 Held him unworthy of his native sway,
 Should trust him now, and doubt auxiliar friends ?
 Injurious men ! we scorn the thoughts of flight.
 Let Asia bring her numbers ; unconstrain'd, 700
 We will confront them, and for Greece expire.

THUS in the garb of virtue he adorn'd
 Necessity. Laconia's king perceiv'd
 Thro' all its fair disguise the traitor's heart.
 So when at first mankind in science rude 705
 Rever'd the moon, as bright in native beams,
 Some sage, who walk'd with nature thro' her works,
 By wisdom led, discern'd the various orb,
 Dark in itself, in foreign splendors clad.

LEONIDAS concludes. Ye Spartans, hear ; 710
 Hear you, O Grecians, in our lot by choice
 Partakers, destin'd to enrol your names
 In time's eternal record, and enhance
 Your country's lustre : lo ! the noontide blaze
 Inflames the broad horizon. Each retire ; 715
 Each in his tent invoke the pow'r of sleep
 To brace his vigour, to enlarge his strength
 For long endurance. When the sun descends,
 Let each appear in arms. You, brave allies
 Of Corinth, Phlius, and Mycenæ's tow'rs, 720
 Arcadians,

Arcadians, Locrians, must not yet depart.
 While we repose, embattled wait. Retreat,
 When we our tents abandon. I resign
 To great Oïleus' son supreme command.
 Take my embraces, Æschylus. The fleet 725
 Expects thee. To Themistocles report
 What thou hast seen and heard. O thrice farewell!
 Th' Athenian answer'd. To yourselves, my friends,
 Your virtues immortality secure,
 Your bright examples victory to Greece. 730

RETAINING these injunctions, all dispers'd;
 While in his tent Leonidas remain'd
 Apart with Agis, whom he thus bespake.
 Yet in our fall the pond'rous hand of Greece
 Shall Asia feel. This Persian's welcome tale 735
 Of us, inextricably doom'd her prey,
 As by the force of forcery will wrap
 Security around her, will suppress
 All sense, all thought of danger, Brother, know,
 'That soon as Cynthia from the vault of heav'n 740
 Withdraws her shining lamp, thro' Asia's host
 Shall massacre and desolation rage.
 Yet not to base associates will I trust
 My vast design. Their perfidy might warn
 'The unsuspecting foe, our fairest fruits 745
 Of glory thus be wither'd. Ere we move,
 While on the solemn sacrifice intent,
 As Lacedæmon's ancient laws ordain,
 Our pray'rs we offer to the tuneful nine,
 Thou whisper thro' the willing ranks of Thebes 750
 Slow

Slow and in silence to disperse and fly.

Now left by Agis, on his couch reclin'd,
The Spartan king thus meditates alone.

My fate is now impending. O my soul,
What more auspicious period could'st thou choose 755
For death, than now, when, beating high in joy,

Thou tell'st me, I am happy? If to live,
Or die, as virtue dictates, be to know
The purest bliss; if she her charms displays
Still lovely, still unfading, still serene 760

To youth, to age, to death: whatever be
Those other climes of happiness unchang'd,
Which heav'n in dark futurity conceals,
Still here, O virtue, thou art all our good.
Oh! what a black, unspeakable reverse 765

Must the unrighteous, must the tyrant prove?
What in the struggle of departing day,
When life's last glimpse, extinguishing, presents
Unknown, inextricable gloom? But how
Can I explain the terrors of a breast, 770

Where guilt resides? Leonidas, forego
The horrible conception, and again
Within thy own felicity retire;

Bow grateful down to Him, who form'd thy mind
Of crimes unfruitful never to admit 775

The black impression of a guilty thought.
Else could I fearless by delib'rate choice,
Relinquish life? This calm from minds deprav'd:

Is ever absent. Oft in them the force
Of some prevailing passion for a time 780

Suppresses

Suppresses fear. Precipitate they lose
The sense of danger ; when dominion, wealth,
Or purple pomp enchant the dazzled sight,
Pursuing still the joys of life alone.

BUT he, who calmly seeks a certain death, 785
When duty only, and the gen'ral good
Direct his courage, must a soul possess,
Which, all content deducing from itself,
Can by unerring virtue's constant light
Discern, when death is worthy of his choice. 790

THE man, thus great and happy, in the scope
Of his large mind is stretch'd beyond his date.
Ev'n on this shore of being he in thought,
Supremely blest'd, anticipates the good,
Which late posterity from him derives. 795

At length the hero's meditations close.
The swelling transport of his heart subsides
In soft oblivion ; and the silken plumes
Of sleep envelop his extended limbs.

THE END OF THE TENTH BOOK.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE ELEVENTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas, rising before sun-set, dismisses the forces under the command of Medon ; but observing a reluctance in him to depart, reminds him of his duty, and gives him an affectionate farewell. He then relates to his own select band a dream, which is interpreted by Megistias, arms himself, and marches in procession with his whole troop to an altar, newly raised on a neighbouring meadow ; there offers a sacrifice to the muses : he invokes the assistance of these goddesses ; he animates his companions ; then, placing himself at their head, leads them against the enemy in the dead of the night.

THE day was closing. Agis left his tent.
He sought his god-like brother. Him he found
Stretch'd o'er his tranquil couch. His looks retain'd
The cheerful tincture of his waking thoughts
To gladden sleep. So smile soft evening skies, 5
Yet streak'd with ruddy light, when summer's suns
Have veil'd their beaming foreheads. Transport fill'd
The eye of Agis. Friendship swell'd his heart.
His yielding knee in veneration bent,
The hero's hand he kiss'd, then fervent thus. 10

O EXCEL-

O EXCELLENCE ineffable ! receive
 This secret homage ; and may gentle sleep
 Yet longer seal thine eyelids, that, unblam'd,
 I may fall down before thee. He concludes
 In adoration of his friend divine, 15
 Whose brow the shades of slumber now forsake.
 So, when the rising sun resumes his state,
 Some white-rob'd magus on Euphrates side,
 Or Indian seer on Ganges prostrate falls
 Before th' emerging glory, to salute 20
 That radiant emblem of th' immortal mind.

UP rise both heroes. From their tents in arms
 Appear the bands elect. The other Greeks
 Are filing homeward. Only Medon stops.
 Melissa's dictates he forgets a while. 25
 All inattentive to the warning voice
 Of Melibæus, earnest he surveys
 Leonidas. Such constancy of zeal
 In good Oileus' offspring brings the fire
 To full remembrance in that solemn hour, 30
 And draws these cordial accents from the king.

APPROACH me, Locrian. In thy look I trace
 Consummate faith and love. But, vers'd in arms,
 Against thy gen'ral's orders would'st thou stay?
 Go, prove to kind Oileus, that my heart 35
 Of him was mindful, when the gates of death
 I barr'd against his son. Yon gallant Greeks,
 To thy commanding care from mine transferr'd,
 Remove from certain slaughter. Last repair
 To Lacedæmon. Thither lead thy fire. 40

Say to her senate, to her people tell,
 Here didst thou leave their countrymen and king
 On death resolv'd, obedient to the laws.

THE Locrian chief, restraining tears, replies.

My fire, left slumb'ring in the island-fane, 45
 Awoke no more. Then joyful I shall meet
 Him soon, the king made answer. Let thy worth
 Supply thy father's. Virtue bids me die,
 Thee live. Farewel. Now Medon's grief, o'eraw'd
 By wisdom, leaves his long-suspended mind 50
 To firm decision. He departs, prepar'd
 For all the duties of a man, by deeds
 To prove himself the friend of Sparta's king,
 Meliffa's brother, and Oileus' son.

THE gen'rous victims of the public weal, 55
 Assembled now, Leonidas salutes,
 His pregnant soul disburd'ning. O thrice hail!
 Surround me, Grecians; to my words attend.
 This evening's sleep no sooner press'd my brows,
 Than o'er my head the empyreal form 60
 Of heav'n-enthron'd Alcides was display'd.

I saw his magnitude divine. His voice
 I heard, his solemn mandate to arise.
 I rose. He bade me follow. I obey'd.
 A mountain's summit, clear'd from mist, or cloud, 65
 We reach'd in silence. Suddenly the howl
 Of wolves and dogs, the vulture's piercing shriek,
 The yell of ev'ry beast and bird of prey
 Discordant grated on my ear. I turn'd.
 A surface hideous, delug'd o'er with blood, 70

Beyond

Beyond my view illimitably stretch'd,
 One vast expanse of horror. There supine,
 Of huge dimension, cov'ring half the plain,
 A giant corse lay mangled, red with wounds,
 Delv'd in th' enormous flesh, which, bubbling, fed 75
 Ten thousand thousand grisly beaks and jaws,
 Insatiably devouring. Mute I gaz'd ;
 When from behind I heard a second sound
 Like surges, tumbling o'er a craggy shore.
 Again I turn'd. An ocean there appear'd 80
 With riven keels and shrouds, with shiver'd oars,
 With arms and weltring carcasses bestrewn
 Innumerable. The billows foam'd in blood.
 But where the waters, unobserv'd before,
 Between two adverse shores, contracting, roll'd 85
 A stormy current, on the beach forlorn,
 One of majestic stature I descry'd
 In ornaments imperial. Oft he bent
 On me his clouded eyeballs. Oft my name
 He roused forth in execrations loud ; 90
 Then rent his splendid garments ; then his head
 In rage divested of its graceful hairs.
 Impatient now he ey'd a slender skiff,
 Which, mounted high on boistrous waves, approach'd.
 With indignation, with reluctant grief 95
 Once more his sight reverting, he embark'd
 Amid the perils of the frowning deep.
 O thou, by glorious actions rank'd in heav'n,
 I here exclaim'd, instruct me. What produc'd
 This desolation ? Hercules reply'd. 100

Let thy astonish'd eye again survey,
 The scene thy soul abhorr'd. I look'd. I saw
 A land, where plenty with disporting hands
 Pour'd all the fruits of Amalthea's horn;
 Where bloom'd the olive; where the clust'ring vine 105
 With her broad foliage mantled ev'ry hill;
 Where Ceres with exuberance, enrob'd
 The pregnant bosoms of the fields in gold;
 Where spacious towns, whose circuits proud contain'd
 The dazzling works of wealth along the banks 110
 Of copious rivers shew'd their stately tow'rs,
 The strength and splendor of the peopled land.
 Then in a moment clouds obscur'd my view;
 At once all vanish'd from my waking eyes.
 THrice I salute the omen, loud began 115
 The sage Megistias. In this mystic dream.
 I see my country's victories. The land,
 The deep shall own her triumphs; while the tears
 Of Asia and of Lybia shall deplore
 Their offspring, cast before the vulture's beak, 120
 And ev'ry monstrous native of the main.
 Those joyous fields of plenty picture Greece,
 Enrich'd by conquest, and Barbarian spoils.
 He, whom thou saw'st, in regal vesture clad,
 Print on the sand his solitary step, 125
 Is Xerxes, foil'd and fugitive. So spake
 The rev'rend augur. Ev'ry bosom felt
 Enthusiastic rapture, joy beyond
 All sense, and all conception, but of those,
 Who die to save their country. Here again 130
 Th' exulting band Leonidas address'd.

SINCE happiness from virtue is deriv'd,
 Who for his country dies, that moment proves
 Most happy, as most virtuous. Such our lot.
 But go, Megistias. Instantly prepare 135
 The sacred fuel, and the victim due ;
 That to the nuses (so by Sparta's law
 We are enjoin'd) our off'rings may be paid,
 Before we march. Remember, from the rites
 Let ev'ry sound be absent ; not the fife, 140
 Not ev'n the music-breathing flute be heard.
 Mean time, ye leaders, ev'ry band instruct
 To move in silence. Mindful of their charge
 The chiefs depart. Leonidas provides
 His various armour. Agis close attends, 145
 His best assistant. First a breast-plate arms
 The spacious chest. O'er this the hero spreads
 The mailed cuirass, from his shoulders hung.
 A shining belt in folds his mighty loins.
 • Next on his stately temples he erects 150
 The plumed helm ; then grasps his pond'rous shield :
 Where nigh the centre on projecting brass
 Th' inimitable artist had emboss'd
 The shape of great Alcides ; whom to gain
 Two goddesses contended. Pleasure here 155
 Won by soft wiles th' attracted eye ; and there
 The form of Virtue dignify'd the scene.
 In her majestic sweetness was display'd
 The mind sublime and happy. From her lips
 Seem'd eloquence to flow. In look serene, 160
 But fix'd intensely on the son of Jove,

She wav'd her hand, where, winding to the skies,
 Her paths ascended. On the summit stood,
 Supported by a trophy near to heav'n,
 Fame, and protended her eternal trump. 165
 The youth, attentive to her wisdom, own'd
 The prevalence of Virtue ; while his eye,
 Fill'd by that spirit, which redeem'd the world
 From tyranny and monsters, darted flames ;
 Not undescry'd by Pleasure, where she lay 170
 Beneath a gorgeous canopy. Around
 Were flowrets strewn, and wantonly in rills
 A fount mæander'd. All relax'd her limbs ;
 Nor wanting yet sollicitude to gain,
 What lost she fear'd, as struggling with despair, 175
 She seem'd collecting ev'ry pow'r to charm :
 Excess of sweet allurements she diffus'd
 In vain. Still Virtue sway'd Alcides' mind.
 Hence all his labours. Wrought with vary'd art,
 'The shield's external surface they enrich'd. 180
 This portraiture of glory on his arm
 Leonidas displays, and, tow'ring, strides
 From his pavilion. Ready are the bands.
 'The chiefs assume their station. Torches blaze
 Thro' ev'ry file. All now in silent pace 185
 To join in solemn sacrifice proceed.
 First Polydorus bears the hallow'd knife,
 The sacred salt and barley. At his side
 Diomedon sustains a weighty mace.
 The priest, Megistias, follows like the rest 190
 In polish'd armour. White, as winter's fleece,

A fillet

A fillet round his shining helm reveals
 The sacerdotal honours. By the horns,
 Where laurels twine, with Alpheus Maron leads
 The consecrated ox. And lo ! behind, 195
 Leonidas advances. Never he
 In such transcendent majesty was seen,
 And his own virtue never so enjoy'd.
 Successive move Dieneces the brave ;
 In hoary state Demophilus ; the bloom 200
 Of Dithyrambus, glowing in the hope
 Of future praise ; the gen'rous Agis next,
 Serene and graceful ; last the Theban chiefs,
 Repining, ignominious : then slow march
 The troops all mute, nor shake their brazen arms. 205
 Not from Thermopylæ remote the hills
 Of Oeta, yielding to a fruitful dale,
 Within their side, half-circling, had inclos'd
 A fair expanse in verdure smooth. The bounds
 Were edg'd by wood, o'erlook'd by snowy cliffs, 210
 Which from the clouds bent frowning. Down a rock,
 Above the loftiest summit of the grove,
 A tumbling torrent wore the shagged stone ;
 Then, gleaming thro' the intervals of shade,
 Attain'd the valley, where the level stream 215
 Diffus'd refreshment. On its banks the Greeks
 Had rais'd a rustic altar, fram'd of turf.
 Broad was the surface, high in piles of wood,
 All interspers'd with laurel. Purer deem'd,
 Than river, lake, or fountain, in a vase 220
 Old Ocean's briny element was plac'd

Before the altar ; and of wine unmix'd
 Capacious goblets flood. Megistias now
 His helm unloosen'd. With his snowy head,
 Uncover'd, round the solemn pile he trod. 225
 He shook a branch of laurel, scatt'ring wide
 The sacred moisture of the main. His hand
 Next on the altar, on the victim strew'd
 The mingled salt and barley. O'er the horns
 Th' inverted chalice, foaming from the grape, 230
 Discharg'd a rich libation. Then approach'd
 Diomedon. Megistias gave the sign.
 Down sunk the victim by a deathful stroke,
 Nor groan'd. The augur bury'd in the throat
 His hallow'd steel. A purple current flow'd. 235
 Now smok'd the structure, now it flam'd abroad
 In sudden splendor. Deep in circling ranks
 The Grecians press'd. Each held a sparkling brand ;
 The beaming lances internix'd ; the helms,
 The burnish'd armour multiply'd the blaze. 240
 Leonidas drew nigh. Before the pile
 His feet he planted. From his brows remov'd,
 The casque to Agis he consign'd ; his shield,
 His spear to Dithyrambus ; then, his arms
 Extending, forth in supplication broke. 245

HARMONIOUS daughters of Olympian Jove,
 Who, on the top of Helicon ador'd,
 And high Parnassus, with delighted ears
 Bend to the warble of Castalia's stream,
 Or Aganippe's murmur, if from thence 250
 We must invoke your presence ; or along

The

The neighb'ring mountains with propitious steps
If now you grace your consecrated bow'rs,
Look down, ye Muses ; nor disdain to stand
Each an immortal witness of our fate. 255
But with you bring fair Liberty, whom Jove,
And you most honour. Let her sacred eyes
Approve her dying Grecians ; let her voice
In exultation tell the earth and heav'ns,
These are her sons. Then strike your tuneful shells. 260
Record us guardians of our parent's age,
Our matron's virtue, and our children's bloom,
The glorious bulwarks of our country's laws,
Who shall ennoble the historian's page,
Shall on the joyous festival inspire 265
With loftier strains the virgin's choral song.
Then, O celestial maids, on yonder camp
Let night sit heavy. Let a sleep like death
Weigh down the eye of Asia. O infuse
A cool, untroubled spirit in our breasts, 270
Which may in silence guide our daring feet,
Controul our fury, nor by tumult wild
The friendly dark affright ; till dying groans
Of slaughter'd tyrants into horror wake
The midnight calm. Then turn destruction loose. 275
Let terror, let confusion rage around,
In one vast ruin heap the barb'rous ranks,
Their horse, their chariots. Let the spurning steed
Imbrue his hoofs in blood, the shatter'd cars
Crush with their brazen weight the prostrate necks 280
Of chiefs and kings, encircled, as they fall,

By

By nations slain. You, countrymen and friends,
 My last commands retain. Your gen'ral's voice
 Once more salutes you, not to rouse the brave,
 Or minds, resolv'd and dauntless, to confirm. 285

Too well by this expiring blaze I see
 Impatient valour flash from ev'ry eye.
 O temper well that ardour, and your lips
 Close on the rising transport. Mark, how sleep
 Hath folded millions in his black embrace. 290

No sound is wafted from th' unnumber'd foe.
 The winds themselves are silent. All conspires
 To this great sacrifice, where thousands soon
 Shall only wake to die. Their crouded train
 This night, perhaps, to Pluto's dreary shades 295

Ev'n Xerxes' ghost may lead, unless reserv'd
 From this destruction to lament a doom
 Of more disgrace, when Greece confounds that pow'r,
 Which we will shake. But look, the setting moon
 Shuts on our darksome path her waning horns. 300

Let each his head distinguish by a wreath
 Of well-earn'd laurel. Then the victim share,
 Then crown the goblet. Take your last repast;
 With your forefathers, and the heroes old,
 You next will banquet in the blest abodes. 305

HERE ends their leader. Thro' th' encircling croud
 The agitation of their spears denotes
 High ardour. So the spiry growth of pines
 Is rock'd, when Æolus in eddies winds
 Among their stately trunks on Pelion's brow. 310
 The Acarnanian seer distributes swift

The

The sacred laurel. Snatch'd in eager zeal,
 Around each helm the woven leaves unite
 Their glossy verdure to the floating plumes.
 Then is the victim portion'd. In the bowl 315
 Then flows the vine's empurpled stream. Aloof
 The Theban train, in wan dejection mute,
 Brood o'er their shame, or cast affrighted looks
 On that determin'd courage, which, unmov'd
 At fate's approach, with chearful lips could taste 320
 The sparkling goblet, could in joy partake
 That last, that glorious banquet. Ev'n the heart
 Of Anaxander had forgot its wiles,
 Dissembling fear no longer. Agis here,
 Regardful ever of the king's command, 325
 Accosts the Theban chiefs in whispers thus :

LEONIDAS permits you to retire.

While on the rites of sacrifice employ'd,
 None heed your motions. Separate and fly
 In silent pace. This heard, th' inglorious troop, 330
 Their files dissolving, from the rest withdraw.
 Unseen they moulder from the host like snow,
 Freed from the rigour of constraining frost ;
 Soon as the sun exerts his orient beam,
 The transitory landscape melts in rill's 335
 Away, and structures, which delude the eye,
 Insensib'y are lost. The solemn feast
 Was now concluded. Now Laconia's king
 Had reassum'd his arms. Before his step
 The croud roll backward. In their gladden'd fight 340
 His crest, illumin'd by uplifted brands,

Its purple splendor shakes. The tow'ring oak.
 Thus from a lofty promontory waves
 His majesty of verdure. As with joy
 'The sailors mark his heav'n-ascending pride, 345
 Which from afar directs their foamy course
 Along the pathless ocean; so the Greeks
 In transport gaze, as down their op'ning ranks
 The king proceeds; from whose superior frame
 A soul like thine, O Phidias, might conceive 350
 In Parian marble, or effulgent brass
 The form of great Apollo; when the god,
 Won by the pray'rs of man's afflicted race,
 In arms forsook his lucid throne to pierce
 The monster Python in the Delphian vale. 355
 Close by the hero Polydorus waits
 To guide destruction thro' the Asian tents.
 As the young eagle near his parent's side
 In wanton flight essays his vig'rous wing,
 Ere long with her to penetrate the clouds, 360
 To dart impetuous on the fleecy train,
 And dye his beak in gore; by Sparta's king:
 The injur'd Polydorus thus prepares
 His arm for death. He feasts his angry soul
 On promis'd vengeance. His impatient thoughts 365
 Ev'n now transport him furious to the seat
 Of his long sorrows, not with fetter'd hands,
 But now once more a Spartan with his spear,
 His shield restor'd, to lead his country's bands,
 And with them devastation. Nor the rest 370
 Neglect to form. Thick-rang'd, the helmets blend
 Their

Their various plumes, as intermingling oaks
Combine their foliage in Dodona's grove ;
Or as the cedars on the Syrian hills
Their shady texture spread. Once more the king, 375
O'er all the phalanx his confid'rate view
Extending, thro' the ruddy gleam descries
One face of gladness ; but the godlike van
He most contemplates : Agis, Alpheus there,
Megistias, Maion, with Plataea's chief, 380
Dieneces, Demophilus are seen
With Thespia's youth : nor they their steady fight
From his remove, in speechless transport bound
By love, by veneration ; till they hear
His last injunction. 'To their diff'rent posts 385
They sep'rate. Instant on the dewy turf
Are cast th' extinguish'd brands. On all around
Drops sudden darkness, on the wood, the hill,
The snowy ridge, the vale, the silver stream.
It verg'd on midnight Tow'rd the hostile camp 390
In march compos'd and silent down the pass
The phalanx mov'd. Each patient bosom hush'd
Its struggling spirit, nor in whispers breath'd
The rapt'rous ardour, virtue then inspir'd.
So lowering clouds along th' etherial void 395
In slow expansion from the gloomy north
A while suspend their horrors, destin'd soon
To blaze in lightnings, and to burst in storms.

THE END OF THE ELEVENTH BOOK.

LEONIDAS.

BOOK THE TWELFTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas and the Grecians penetrate through the Persian camp to the very pavilion of Xerxes, who avoids destruction by flight. The Barbarians are slaughter'd in great multitudes, and their camp is set on fire. Leonidas conducts his men in good order back to Thermopylæ, engages the Persians, who were descended from the hills, and, after numberless proofs of superior strength and valour, sinks down covered with wounds, and expires the last of all the Grecian commanders.

A CROSS th' unguarded bound of Asia's camp
Slow pass the Grecians. Thro' innum'rous tents,
Where all is mute and tranquil, they pursue
Their march sedate. Beneath the leaden hand
Of sleep lie millions motionless and deaf, 5
Nor dream of fate's approach. Their wary foes,
By Polydorus guided, still proceed.
Ev'n to the center of th' extensive host
They pierce unseen; when lo! th' imperial tent
Yet distant rose before them. Spreading round 10
Th' august pavilion, was an ample space

For

For thousands in arrangement. Here a band
 Of chosen Persians, watchful o'er the king,
 Held their nocturnal station. As the hearts
 Of anxious nations, whom th' unsparing sword, 15
 Or famine threaten, tremble at the sight
 Of fear-engender'd phantoms in the sky,
 Aerial hosts amid the clouds array'd,
 Portending woe and death ; the Persian guard
 In equal consternation now descry'd 20
 The glimpse of hostile armour. All disband,
 As if auxiliar to his favour'd Greeks
 Pan held their banner, scatt'ring from its folds
 Fear and confusion, which to Xerxes' couch,
 Swift-winged, fly ; thence shake the gen'ral camp, 25
 Whose numbers issue naked, pale, unarm'd,
 Wild in amazement, blinded by dismay,
 To ev'ry foe obnoxious. In the breasts
 Of thousands, gor'd at once, the Grecian steel
 Reeks in destruction. Deluges of blood 30
 Float o'er the field, and foam around the heaps
 Of wretches, slain unconscious of the hand
 Which wastes their helpless multitude. Amaze,
 Affright, distraction from his pillow chace
 The lord of Asia, who in thought beholds 35
 United Greece in arms. Thy lust of pow'r !
 Thy hope of glory ! whither are they flown
 With all thy pomp ? In this disastrous hour
 What could avail th' immeasurable range
 Of thy proud camp, save only to conceal 40
 Thy trembling steps, O Xerxes, while thou fly'st ?

To thy deserted couch with other looks
 With other steps Leonidas is nigh.
 Before him terror strides. Gigantic death,
 And desolation at his side attend. 45

THE vast pavilion's empty space, where lamps
 Of gold shed light and odours, now admits
 The hero. Ardent throngs behind him press,
 But miss their victim. To the ground are hurl'd
 The glitt'ring ensigns of imperial state. 50

The diadem, the sceptre, late ador'd
 Thro' boundless kingdoms, underneath their feet
 In mingled rage and scorn the warriors crush
 A sacrifice to freedom. They return
 Again to form. Leonidas exalts, 55

For new destruction his resistless spear;
 When double darkness suddenly descends.
 The clouds, condensing, intercept the stars.
 Black o'er the furrow'd main the raging east
 In whirlwinds sweeps the surge. The coasts resound. 60
 The cavern'd rocks, the crashing forests roar.

Swift thro' the camp the hurricane impels
 Its rude career; when Asia's numbers, veil'd
 Amid the shelt'ring horrors of the storm,
 Evade the victor's lance. The Grecians halt; 65

While to their gen'ral's pregnant mind occurs
 A new attempt and vast. Perpetual fire
 Beside the tent of Xerxes, from the hour
 He lodg'd his standards on the Malian plains,
 Had shone. Among his Magi to adore 70

Great Horomazes was the monarch wont

Before

Before the sacred light. Huge piles of wood
 Lay nigh, prepar'd to feed the constant flame.
 On living embers these are cast. So wills
 Leonidas. The phalanx then divides. 75
 Four troops are form'd, by Dithyrambus led,
 By Alpheus, by Diomedon. The last
 Himself conducts. The word is giv'n. They seize
 The burning fuel. Sparkling in the wind,
 Destructive fire is brandish'd. All, enjoin'd 80
 To re-assemble at the regal tent,
 By various paths the hostile camp invade.

Now devastation, unconfin'd, involves
 The Malian fields. Among Barbarian tents
 From diff'rent stations fly consuming flames. 85
 The Greeks afford no respite, and the storm
 Exasperates the blaze. To ev'ry part
 The conflagration like a sea expands,
 One waving surface of unbounded fire.
 In ruddy volumes mount the curling flames 90
 To heav'n's dark vault, and paint the midnight clouds.
 So, when the north emits his purpled lights,
 The undulated radiance, streaming wide,
 As with a burning canopy invests
 Th' etherial concave. Oëta now disclos'd 95
 His forehead, glitt'ring in eternal frost ;
 While down his rocks the foamy torrents shone.
 Far o'er the main the pointed rays were thrown ;
 Night snatch'd her mantle from the ocean's breast ;
 The billows glimmer'd from the distant shores. 100

BUT lo! a pillar huge of smoke ascends,
 Which overshades the field. There horror, there
 Leonidas presides. Command he gave
 To Polydorus, who, exulting, shew'd,
 Where Asia's horse and warlike cars possess'd 105
 A crowded station. At the hero's nod
 Devouring Vulcan riots on the stores
 Of Ceres, empty'd of the ripen'd grain,
 On all the tribute from her meadows brown,
 By rich Thessalia render'd to the scythe. 110
 A flood of fire envelopes all the ground.
 The cordage bursts around the blazing tents.
 Down sink the roofs on suffocated throngs,
 Close-wedg'd by fear. The Libyan chariot burns.
 Th' Arabian camel, and the Persian steed, 115
 Bound thro' a burning deluge. Wild with pain
 They shake their singed manes. Their madding hoofs
 Dash thro' the blood of thousands, mix'd with flames,
 Which rage, augmented by the whirlwind's blast.

MEANTIME the scepter'd lord of half the globe 120
 From tent to tent precipitates his flight.
 Dispers'd are all his satraps. Pride herself
 Shuns his dejected brow. Despair alone
 Waits on th' imperial fugitive, and shews,
 As round the camp his eye, distracted, roves, 125
 No limits to destruction. Now is seen
 Aurora, mounting from her eastern hill
 In rosy sandals, and with dewy locks.
 The winds subside before her; darkness flies;
 A stream of light proclaims the chearful day, 130
 Which

Which fees at Xerxes' tent the conqu'ring bands,
 All reunited. What could fortune more
 To aid the valiant ? what to gorge revenge ?
 Lo ! desolation o'er the adverse host
 Hath empty'd all her terrors. Ev'n the hand 135
 Of languid slaughter dropt the crimson steel ;
 Nor nature longer can sustain the toil
 Of unremitted conquest. Yet what pow'r
 Among these sons of Liberty reviv'd
 Their drooping warmth, new-strung their nerves, recall'd
 Their weary'd swords to deeds of brighter fame ? 141
 What, but th' inspiring hope of glorious death
 To crown their labours, and th' auspicious look
 Of their heroic chief, which, still unchang'd,
 Still in superior majesty declar'd, 145
 No toil had yet relax'd his matchless strength,
 Nor worn the vigour of his godlike soul.

BACK to the pass in gentle march he leads
 Th' embattled warriors. They behind the shrubs,
 Where Medon sent such numbers to the shades, 150
 In ambush lie. The tempest is o'erblown.
 Soft breezes only from the Malian wave
 O'er each grim face, besmear'd with smoke and gore,
 Their cool refreshment breathe. The healing gale,
 A crystal rill near Oeta's verdant feet, 155
 Dispel the languor from their harrass'd nerves,
 Fresh brac'd by strength returning. O'er their heads
 Lo ! in full blaze of majesty, appears
 Melissa, bearing in her hand divine
 Th' eternal guardian of illustrious deeds, 160

The sweet Phœbean lyre. Her graceful train
 Of white-rob'd virgins, seated on a range
 Half down the cliff, o'ershadowing the Greeks,
 All with concordant firings, and accents clear,
 A torrent pour of melody, and swell 165
 A high, triumphal, solemn dirge of praise,
 Anticipating fame. Of endless joys
 In blest'd Elysium was the song. Go, meet
 Lycurgus, Solon, and Zaleucus sage,
 Let them salute the children of their laws. 170
 Meet Homer, Orpheus, and th' Ascræan bard,
 Who with a spirit, by ambrosial food
 Refin'd, and more exalted, shall contend
 Your splendid fate to warble thro' the bow'rs
 Of amaranth and myrtle ever young, 175
 Like your renown. Your ashes we will cull.
 In yonder fane deposited, your urns,
 Dear to the Muses, shall our lays inspire.
 Whatever off'rings genius, science, art,
 Can dedicate to virtue, shall be yours, 180
 The gifts of all the Muses, to transmit
 You on th' enliven'd canvass, marble, brass,
 In Wisdom's volume, in the poet's song,
 In ev'ry tongue, thro' ev'ry age and clime,
 You of this earth the brightest flow'rs, not cropt, 185
 Transplanted only to immortal bloom
 Of praise with men, of happiness with gods.
 THE Grecian valour on religion's flame
 To ecstasy is wafted. Death is nigh.
 As by the Graces fashion'd, he appears 190
 A beauteous

A beauteous form. His adamant gate
Is half unfolded. All in transport catch
A glimpse of immortality. Elate
In rapturous delusion they believe,
That to behold and solemnize their fate 195
The goddesses are present on the hills
With celebrating lyres. In thought serene
Leonidas the kind deception blest'd,
Nor undeceiv'd his soldiers. After all
Th' incessant labours of the horrid night, 200
Thro' blood, thro' flames continu'd, he prepares
In order'd battle to confront the pow'rs
Of Hyperanthes from the upper streights.
No longer the Greeks in expectation wait
Impatient. Sudden with tumultuous shouts 205
Like Nile's rude current, where in deaf'ning roar
Prone from the steep of Elephantis falls
A sea of waters, Hyperanthes pours
His chosen numbers on the Grecian camp
Down from the hills precipitant. No foes 210
He finds. The Thebans join him. In his van
They march conductors. On the Persians roll,
In martial thunder, thro' the sounding pass.
They issue forth impetuous from its mouth.
That moment Sparta's leader gave the sign; 215
When, as th' impulsive ram in forceful sway
O'erturns a nodding rampart from its base,
And strews a town with ruin, so the band
Of ferry'd heroes down the Malian steep,
Tremendous depth! the mix'd battalions swept 220
Of

Of Thebes and Persia. There no waters flow'd.
 Abrupt and naked all was rock beneath.
 Leonidas, incens'd, with grappling strength
 Dash'd Anaxander on a pointed crag ;
 Compos'd, then gave new orders. At the word 225
 His phalanx, wheeling, penetrates the pass.
 Astonish'd Persia stops in full career.
 Ev'n Hyperanthes shrinks in wonder back.
 Confusion drives fresh numbers from the shore.
 The Malian ooze o'erwhelms them. Sparta's king 230
 Still presses forward, till an open breadth
 Of fifty paces yields his front extent
 To proffer battle. Hyperanthes soon
 Recals his warriors, dissipates their fears.
 Swift on the great Leonidas a cloud 235
 Of darts is show'r'd. Th' encount'ring armies close.

Who first, sublimest hero, felt thy arm ?
 What rivers heard along their echoing banks
 Thy name, in curses sounded from the lips
 Of noble mothers, wailing for their sons ? 240
 What towns with empty monuments were fill'd
 For those, whom thy unconquerable sword
 To vultures cast ? First Bessus died,
 A haughty satrap, whose tyrannic sway
 Despoil'd Hyrcania of her golden sheaves, 245
 And laid her forests waste. For him the bees
 Among the branches interwove their sweets ;
 For him the fig was ripen'd, and the vine
 In rich profusion o'er the goblet foam'd.
 Then Dinis bled. On Hermus' side he reign'd ; 250
 He

He long assiduous, unavailing woo'd
The martial queen of Caria. She disdain'd
A lover's soft complaint. Her rigid ear
Was fram'd to watch the tempest, while it rag'd,
Her eye accustom'd on the rolling deck 255
To brave the turgid billow. Near the shore
She now is present in her pinnace light.
The spectacle of glory crouds her breast
With diff'rent passions. Valiant, she applauds
The Grecian valour ; faithful, she laments 260
Her sad presage of Persia ; prompts her son
To emulation of the Greeks in aims,
And of herself in loyalty. By fate
Is she reserv'd to signalize that day
Of future shame, when Xerxes must behold 265
The blood of nations overflow his decks,
And to their bottom tinge the briny floods
Of Salamis ; whence she with Asia flies,
She only not inglorious. Low reclines
Her lover now, on Hermus to repeat 270
Her name no more, nor tell the vocal groves
His fruitless sorrows. Next Maduces fell,
A Paphlagonian. Born amid the sound
Of chafing surges, and the roar of winds,
He o'er th' inhospitable Euxine foam 275
Was wont from high Carambis' rock to ken
Ill-fated keels, which cut the Pontic stream,
Then with his dire associates thro' the deep
For spoil and slaughter guide his savage prow.
Him dogs will rend ashore. From Medus far, 280
Their

Their native current, two bold brothers dy'd,
 Sisamnes and Tithraustes, potent lords
 Of rich domains. On these Mithrines grey,
 Cilician prince, Liæus, who had left
 The balmy fragrance of Arabia's fields, 285
 With Babylonian Tenagon expir'd.

THE growing carnage Hyperanthes views
 Indignant, fierce in vengeful ardour strides
 Against the victor. Each his lance protends ;
 But Asia's numbers interpose their shields, 290
 Solicitous to guard a prince rever'd :
 Or thither fortune whelm'd the tide of war,
 His term protracting for augmented fame.
 So two proud vessels, lab'ring on the foam,
 Present for battle their destructive beaks ; 295
 When ridgy seas, by hurricanes upturn,
 In mountainous commotion dash between,
 And either deck, in black'ning tempests veil'd,
 Waft from its distant foe. More fiercely burn'd
 Thy spirit, mighty Spartan. Such dismay. 300
 Relax'd thy foes, that each Barbarian heart
 Resign'd all hopes of victory. The steeds
 Of day were climbing their meridian height.
 Continu'd shouts of onset from the pass
 Resounded o'er the plain. Artuchus heard. 305
 When first the spreading tumult had alarm'd
 His distant quarter, starting from repose,
 He down the valley of Spercheos rush'd
 To aid his regal master. Asia's camp
 He found the seat of terror and despair. 310
 As

As in some fruitful clime, which late hath known
The rage of winds and floods, altho' the storm
Be heard no longer, and the deluge fled,
Still o'er the wasted region nature mourns

In, melancholy silence ; thro' the grove 315

With prostrate glories lie the stately oak,
Th' uprooted elm and beech ; the plain is spread
With fragments, swept from villages o'erthrown,
Around the pastures flocks and herds are cast

In dreary piles of death ; so Persia's host 320

In terror mute one boundless scene displays
Of devastation. Half-devour'd by fire,
Her tall pavilions, and her martial cars,
Deform the wide encampment. Here in gore

Her princes welter, nameless thousands there, 325

Not victims all to Greeks. In gasping heaps
Barbarians, mangled by Barbarians, shew'd
The wild confusion of that direful night ;

When, wanting signals, and a leader's care,
They rush'd on mutual slaughter. Xerxes' tent, 330

On its exalted summit, when the dawn
First streak'd the orient sky, was wont to bear
The golden form of Mithra, clos'd between
Two lucid crystals. 'Tis the gen'ral host

Observ'd, their awful signal to arrange 335

In arms compleat, and numberless to watch
Their monarch's rising. This conspicuous blaze
Artuchus places in th' accusom'd seat.

As, after winds have ruffled by a storm
The plumes of darkness, when her welcome face 340
The

The morning lifts serene, each wary swain
 Collects his flock dispers'd ; the neighing steed,
 The herds forsake their shelter : all return
 To well-known pastures, and frequented streams:
 So now this cheering signal on the tent 345
 Revives each leader. From inglorious flight
 Their scatter'd bands they call, their wonted ground
 Resume, and hail Artuchus. From their swarms
 A force he culls. Thermopylæ he seeks.
 Fell shouts in horrid dissonance precede. 350

His phalanx swift Leonidas commands
 To circle backward from the Malian bay.
 Their order changes. Now, half-orb'd, they stand,
 By Oeta's fence protected from behind,
 With either flank united to the rock. 355
 As by th' excelling architect dispos'd
 To shield some haven, a stupendous mole,
 Fram'd of the grove and quarry's mingled strength,
 In ocean's bosom penetrates afar :
 There, pride of art, inmoveable it looks 360
 On Eolus and Neptune ; there defies
 Those potent gods combin'd : unyielding thus,
 The Grecians stood a solid mass of war
 Against Artuchus, join'd with numbers new
 To Hyperanthes. In the foremost rank 365
 Leonidas his dreadful station held.

Around him soon a spacious void was seen,
 By flight or slaughter, in the Persian van.
 In gen'rous shame and wrath Artuchus burns,
 Discharging full at Lacedæmon's chief 370
 An

An iron-studded mace. It glanc'd aside,
Turn'd by the massy buckler. Prone to earth
The satrap fell. Alcander aim'd his point,
Which had transfix'd him prostrate on the rock,
But for th' immediate succour he obtain'd 375
From faithful foldiers, lifting on their shields
A' chief belov'd. Not such Alcander's lot.
An arrow wounds his heart. Supine he lies,
The only Theban, who to Greece preserv'd
Unviolated faith. Physician sage, 380
On pure Cithæron healing herbs to cull
Was he accustom'd, to expatiate o'er
The Heliconian pastures, where no plants
Of poison spring, of juice salubrious all,
Which vipers, winding in their verdant track, 385
Drink and expel the venom from their tooth,
Dipt in the sweetness of that soil divine.
On him the brave Artontes sinks in death,
Renown'd thro' wide Bithynia, ne'er again
The clam'rous rites of Cybelé to share ; 390
While echo murmurs thro' the hollow caves
Of Berecynthian Dindymus. The strength
Of Alpheus sent him to the shades of night.
Ere from the dead was disengag'd the spear,
Huge Abradates, glorying in his might, 395
Surpassing all of Cissian race, advanc'd
To grapple ; planting firm his foremost step,
The victor's throat he grasp'd. At Nemea's games
The wrestler's chaplet Alpheus had obtain'd.
He summons all his art. Oblique the stroke 400

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Of his swift foot supplants the Persian's heel.
 He, falling, clings by Alpheus' neck, and drags
 His foe upon him. In the Spartan's back
 Enrag'd Barbarians fix their thronging spears.
 To Abradates' chest the weapons pass ; 405
 They rivet both in death. This Maron fees,
 This Polydorus, frowning. Victims, strewn
 Before their vengeance, hide their brother's corse.
 At length the gen'rous blood of Maron warms
 The sword of Hyperanthes. On the spear 410
 Of Polydorus falls the pond'rous axe
 Of Sacian Mardus. From the yielding wood
 The steely point is sever'd. Undismay'd,
 The Spartan stoops to rear the knotted mace,
 Left by Artuchus ; but thy fatal blade, 415
 Abrocomes, that dreadful instant watch'd
 To rend his op'ning side. Unconquer'd still,
 Swift he discharges on the Sacian's front
 A pond'rous blow, which burst the scatter'd brain.
 Down his own limbs meantime a torrent flows 420
 Of vital crimson. Smiling, he reflects
 On sorrow finish'd, on his Spartan name,
 Renew'd in lustre. Sudden to his side
 Springs Dithyrambus. Tho' th' uplifted arm
 Of Mindus, pointing a malignant dart 425
 Against the dying Spartan, he impell'd
 His spear. The point with violence unspent,
 Urg'd by such vigour, reach'd the Persian's throat
 Above his corselet. Polydorus stretch'd
 His languid hand to Thespia's friendly youth, 430
 Then

Then bow'd his head in everlasting peace.
While Mindus, wafted by his streaming wound,
Beside him faints and dies. In flow'ring prime
He, lord of Colchis, from a bride was torn,
His tyrant's hasty mandate to obey. 435
She tow'rd the Euxin sends her plaintive sighs;
She woos in tender piety the winds:
Vain is their favour; they can never breathe
On his returning sail. At once a croud
Of eager Persians seize the victor's spear. 440
One of his nervous hands retains it fast.
The other bares his faulchion. Wounds and death
He scatters round. Sofarmes feels his arm
Lopt from the shoulder. Zantis leaves entwin'd
His fingers round the long-disputed lance. 445
On Mardon's reins descends the pond'rous blade,
Which half divides his body. Pheron strides
Across the pointed ash. His weight o'ercomes
The weary'd Thespian, who resigns his hold;
But cleaves th' elate Barbarian to the brain. 450
Abrecomes darts forward, shakes his steel,
Whose lightning threatens death. The wary Greek
Wards with his sword the well-directed stroke,
Then, closing, throws the Persian. Now what aid
Of mortal force, or interposing heav'n, 455
Preserves the eastern hero? Lo! the friend
Of Teribazus. Eager to avenge
That lov'd, that lost companion, and defend
A brother's life, beneath the sinewy arm,
Outstretch'd, the sword of Hyperanthes pass'd 460
I. 2 Thro'

Thro' Dithyrambus. All the strings of life
 At once relax ; nor fame, nor Greece demand
 More from his valour. Prostrate now he lies
 In glories, ripen'd on his blooming head.
 Him shall the Thespian maidens in their songs 465
 Record once loveliest of the youthful train,
 The gentle, wise, beneficent, and brave.
 Grace of his lineage, and his country's boast,
 Now fall'n. Elysium to his parting soul
 Uncloses. So the cedar, which supreme 470
 Among the groves of Libanus hath tow'r'd,
 Uprooted, low'rs his graceful top, prefer'd,
 For dignity of growth, some royal dome
 Or heav'n-devoted fabric to adorn.
 Diomedon bursts forward. Round his friend 475
 He heaps destruction. Troops of wailing ghosts
 Attend thy shade, fall'n hero ! Long prevail'd
 His furious arm in vengeance uncontroll'd ;
 Till four Assyrians on his shelving spear,
 Ere from a Cissian's prostrate body freed, 480
 Their pond'rous maces all discharge. It broke.
 Still with a shatter'd truncheon he maintains
 Unequal fight. Impetuous thro' his eye
 The well-aim'd fragment penetrates the brain
 Of one bold warrior ; there the splinter'd wood, 485
 Infix'd, remains. The hero last unsheaths
 His faulchion broad. A second sees agliss
 His entrails open'd. Sever'd from a third,
 The head, steel-cas'd, descends. In blood is roll'd
 The grizzly beard. That effort breaks the blade 490
Short

Short from its hilt. The Grecian stands disarm'd.
The fourth, Aftafpes, proud Chaldaean lord,
Is nigh. He lifts his iron-plated mace.
This, while a cluster of auxiliar friends
Hang on the Grecian shield, to earth depress'd, 495
Loads with unerring blows the batter'd helm ;
Till on the ground Diomedon extends
His mighty limbs. So, weaken'd by the force
Of some tremendous engine, which the hand
Of Mars impels, a citadel, high-tow'rd, 500
Whence darts, and fire, and ruins, long have aw'd
Begirding legions, yields at last, and spreads
Its disuniting ramparts on the ground ;
Joy fills th' assailants, and the battle's tide
Whelms o'er the widening breach : the Persians thus 505
O'er the late-fear'd Diomedon advanc'd
Against the Grecian remnant : when behold
Leonidas. At once their ardor froze.
He had a while behind his friends retir'd,
Oppress'd by labour. Pointless was his spear, 510
His buckler cleft. As, overworn by storms,
A vessel steers to some protecting bay ;
Then, soon as timely gales, inviting, curl
The azure floods, to Neptune shews again
Her masts apparell'd fresh in shrouds and sails, 515
Which court the vig'rous wind : so Sparta's king,
In strength repair'd, a spear and buckler new
Presents to Asia. From her bleeding ranks
Hydarnes, urg'd by destiny, approach'd.
He, proudly vaunting, left an infant race, 520

A spouse lamenting on the distant verge
 Of Bactrian Ochus. Victory in vain
 He, parting, promis'd. Wanton hope will sport
 Round his cold heart no longer. Grecian spoils,
 Imagin'd triumphs, pictur'd on his mind, 525
 Fate will erase for ever. Thro' the targe,
 The thick-mail'd corselet, his divided chest,
 Of bony strength, admits the hostile spear.
 Leonidas draws back the steely point,
 Bent and enfeebled by the forceful blow. 530
 Meantime, within his buckler's rim, unseen,
 Amphistreus stealing, in th' unguarded flank
 His dagger struck. In slow effusion ooz'd
 The blood, from Hercules deriv'd ; but death
 Not yet had reach'd his mark. Th' indignant king 535
 Gripes irresistibly the Persian's throat.
 He drags him prostrate. False, corrupt, and base,
 Fallacious, fell ; pre-eminent was he
 Among tyrannic satraps. Phrygia pin'd
 Beneath th' oppression of his ruthless sway. 540
 Her soil had once been fruitful. Once her towns
 Were populous and rich. The direful change
 To naked fields and crumbling roofs declar'd,
 Th' accurs'd Amphistreus govern'd. As the spear
 Of Tyrian Cadmus rivetted to earth 545
 The pois'nous dragon, whose infectious breath
 Had blasted all Bœotia ; so the king,
 On prone Amphistreus trampling, to the rock
 Nails down the tyrant, and the fractur'd staff
 Leaves in his panting body. But the blood, 550
 Great

Great hero, dropping from thy wound, revives
The hopes of Persia. Thy unyielding arm
Upholds the conflict still. Against thy shield
The various weapons shiver, and thy feet
With glitt'ring points surround. The Lydian sword, 555
The Persian dagger, leave their shatter'd hilts ;
Bent is the Caspian scymetar ; the lance,
The javelin, dart, and arrow, all combine
Their fruitless efforts. From Alcides sprung,
Thou stand'st unshaken like a Thracian hill, 560
Like Rhodope, or Hæmus ; where in vain
The thund'ier plants his livid bolt ; in vain
Keen-pointed lightnings pierce th' encrusted snow ;
And winter, beating with eternal war,
Shakes from his dreary wings discordant storms, 565
Chill fleet, and clat'ring hail. Advancing bold,
His rapid lance Abrocomes in vain
Aims at the forehead of Laconia's chief.
He, not unguarded, rears his active blade
Athwart the dang'rous blow, whose fury wastes 570
Above his crest in air. Then, swiftly wheel'd,
The pond'rous weapon cleaves the Persian's knee
Sheer thro' the parted bone. He sidelong falls.
Crush'd on the ground beneath contending feet,
Great Xerxes' brother yields the last remains 575
Of tortur'd life. Leonidas persists ;
Till Agis calls Dieneces, alarms
Demophilus, Megistias : they o'er piles
Of Allarodian and Saspertian dead
Haste to their leader : they before him raise 580
The

The brazen bulwark of their massy shields.
 The foremost rank of Asia stands and bleeds ;
 The rest recoil ; but Hyperanthes swift
 From band to band his various host pervades,
 Their drooping hopes rekindles, in the brave 585
 New fortitude excites : the frigid heart
 Of fear he warms. Aftaspes first obeys,
 Vain of his birth, from ancient Belus drawn,
 Proud of his wealthy stores, his stately domes,
 More proud in recent victory : his might 590
 Had foil'd Platæa's chief. Before the front
 He strides impetuous. His triumphant mace
 Against the brave Dieneces he bends.
 The weighty blow bears down th' opposing shield,
 And breaks the Spartan's shoulder. Idle hangs 595
 The weak defence, and loads th' inactive arm,
 Depriv'd of ev'ry function. Agis bares
 His vengeful blade. At two well levell'd strokes
 Of both his hands, high brandishing the mace,
 He mutilates the foe. A Sacian chief 600
 Springs on the victor. Jaxartes' banks
 'To this brave savage gave his name and birth.
 His look erect, his bold deportment spoke
 A gallant spirit, but untam'd by laws,
 With dreary wilds familiar, and a race 605
 Of rude Barbarians, horrid as their clime.
 From its direction glanc'd the Spartan spear,
 Which, upward borne, o'turn'd his iron cone.
 Black o'er his forehead fall the naked locks ;
 They aggravate his fury : while his foe 610
 Repeats

Repeats the stroke, and penetrates his chest.
Th' intrepid Sacian thro' his breast and back
Receives the griding steel. Along the staff
He writhes his tortur'd body ; in his grasp
A barbed arrow from his quiver shakes ; 615
Deep in the streaming throat of Agis hides
The deadly point ; then grimly smiles, and dies.

From him fate hastens to a nobler prey,
Dieneces. His undefended frame
The shield abandons, sliding from his arm. 620
His breast is gor'd by javelins. On the foe
He hurls them back, extracted from his wounds.
Life, yielding slow to destiny, at length
Forfakes his riven heart ; nor lags in death
Thermopylæ he graces, than before 625
By martial deeds and conduct. What can stem
The barb'rous torrent ? Agis bleeds. His spear
Lies useless, irrecoverably plung'd
In Jaxartes' body. Low reclines
Dieneces. Leonidas himself, 630
O'erlabour'd, wounded, with his dinted sword
The rage of war can exercise no more.
One last, one glorious effort, age performs.
Demophilus, Megistias, join their might.
They check the tide of conquest ; while the spear 635
Of slain Dieneces to Sparta's chief
The fainting Agis bears. The pointed ash,
In that di.e hand for battle rear'd anew,
Blasts ev'ry Persian's valour. Back in heaps
They roll, confounded, by their gen'ral's voice 640
In

In vain exhorted longer to endure
 The ceaseless waste of that unconquer'd arm.
 So, when the giants from Olympus chac'd
 'Th' inferior gods, themselves in terror shun'd
 'Th' incessant streams of lightning, where the hand 645
 Of heav'n's great father with eternal might
 Sustain'd the dreadful conflict. O'er the field
 A while Bellona gives the battle rest ;
 When Thespia's leader and Megistias drop
 At either side of Lacedæmon's king. 650
 Beneath the weight of years and labour bend
 The hoary warriors. Not a groan molests
 Their parting spirits ; but in death's calm night
 All silent sinks each venerable head :
 Like aged oaks, whose deep-descending roots 655
 Had pierc'd resistless thro' a craggy slope ;
 There, during three long centuries, have brav'd
 Malignant Eurys, and the boist'rous north ;
 Till bare and sapless by corroding time,
 Without a blast their mossy trunks recline 660
 Before their parent hill. Not one remains,
 But Agis, near Leonidas, whose hand
 The last kind office to his friend performs,
 Extracts the Sacian's arrow. Life, releas'd,
 Pours forth in crimson floods. O Agis, pale 665
 Thy placid features, rigid are thy limbs ;
 They lose their graces. Dimm'd, thy eyes reveal
 The native goodness of thy heart no more.
 Yet other graces spring. The noble corse
 Leonidas surveys. A pause he finds 670
 To

To mark how lovely are the patriot's wounds,
And see those honours on the breast he lov'd.

BUT Hyperanthes from the trembling ranks
Of Asia's tow'rs, inflexibly resolv'd

The Persian glory to redeem, or fall.

675

The Spartan, worn by toil, his languid arm
Uplifts once more. He waits the dauntless prince.

The heroes now stand adverse. Each a while

Restrains his valour. Each, admiring, views

His godlike foe. At length their brandish'd points 680

Provoke the contest, fated soon to close

The long-continu'd horrors of the day.

Fix'd in amaze and fear, the Asian throng,

Unmov'd and silent on their bucklers pause.

Thus on the wastes of India, while the earth

685

Beneath him groans, the elephant is seen

His huge proboscis writhing, to defy

The strong rhinoceros, whose pond'rous horn

Is newly whetted on a rock. Anon

Each hideous bulk encounters. Earth her groan

690

Redoubles. Trembling, from their covert gaze

The savage inmates of surrounding woods

In distant terror. By the vary'd art

Of either chief the dubious combat long

Its great event retarded. Now his lance

695

Far thro' the hostile shield Laconia's king

Impell'd. Aside the Persian swung his arm.

Beneath it pass'd the weapon, which his targe

Encumber'd. Hopes of conquest and renown

Elate his courage. Sudden he directs

700

His rapid javelin to the Spartan's throat.

But he his wary buckler upward rais'd,

Which

Which o'er his shoulder turn'd the glancing steel ;
 For one last effort then his scatter'd strength
 Collecting, levell'd with resistless force 705
 The massive orb, and dash'd its brazen verge
 Full on the Persian's forehead. Down he sunk,
 Without a groan expiring, as o'erwhelm'd
 Beneath a marble fragment, from its seat
 Heav'd by a whirlwind, sweeping o'er the ridge 710
 Of some aspiring mansion. Gen'rous prince !
 What could his valour more ? His single might
 He match'd with great Leonidas, and fell
 Before his native bands. The Spartan king
 Now stands alone. In heaps his slaughter'd friends, 715
 All stretch'd around him, lie. The distant foes
 Show'r on his head innumerable darts.
 From various sluices gush the vital floods ;
 They stain his fainting limbs. Nor yet with pain
 His brow is clouded ; but those beauteous wounds, 720
 The sacred pledges of his own renown,
 And Sparta's safety, in serene joy
 His closing eye contemplates. Fame can twine
 No brighter laurels round his glorious head ;
 His virtue more to labour fate forbids, 725
 And lays him now in honourable rest,
 To seal his country's liberty by death.

